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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Home Secretary's statement to a reporter, on leaving Victoria for a holiday on the Continent, that he "had a consultation with the doctors" before he "thought it safe to go," and that he now feels that "the worst of the illness is over," will do more to convince the public that there is a strong probability that the King will recover than any of the official bulletins that have been issued. For it enables us to read the real opinion of the doctors between the guarded lines of the bulletins, and fills the rôle which, as Kappa suggests, is supplied in the case of the illness of a friend by a talk with the members of the household. It is clear, of course, that anxiety remains as to whether the King's strength will be sufficient to support the strain which must continue until convalescence is reached; but it is also clear that this is the only point on which there is now real anxiety. It is evident, moreover, that high hopes are entertained that his strength will be materially fortified by the new calcium treatment which it has been decided to apply. If the King recovers, it will be a testimony not only to the patient endurance which has distinguished his career as sovereign, but also to the rapid advance of medical science in the present century.

* * *

France has narrowly escaped a Ministerial crisis, for the theory that M. Poincaré never had any serious intention of resigning will clearly not hold water. In the official communiqué issued after the Cabinet Council on Monday, M. Poincaré made it plain that he

resumed office after his resignation in November only for the purpose of getting through the Budget for 1929, and that from the first he regarded the present Cabinet as provisional. He resigned in November because he did not wish to govern without the Radicals, and he is still as unwilling as ever to govern without them. His decision to resign at once, on which he has now gone back under pressure from the President of the Republic and his colleagues in the Cabinet, was precipitated by the dissension in the Cabinet on the question of increasing Parliamentary salaries. The Cabinet had decided by a large majority that M. Chéron, the Minister of Finance, should propose the increase in the Senate, the Ministers in the minority, who included M. Poincaré, being left free to abstain or even to vote against it; but M. Poincaré was profoundly dissatisfied with this arrangement; and, after the vote had been taken, he announced his intention of resigning as soon as the Budget was passed. It was only at two o'clock on Sunday morning that he was induced to remain in office. In the official communiqué the change was attributed to persuasions of the Cabinet, but it appears that M. Doumergue's representations on Saturday night were really the determining factor.

* * *

It would seem that M. Poincaré's consent to remain in office is, like the Cabinet, only provisional, and that his final decision will depend on the vote that will conclude the debate in the Chamber on the general policy of the Government, which is expected to begin on Thursday of next week. The new session will be opened on Tuesday, and the interpellations on Govern-

ment policy will be the first business after the election of the President and the other officers of the Chamber. There is no doubt that the Government will secure a majority, but it is with the character of the majority that M. Poincaré is concerned, and it seems unlikely that he will remain in office if the great majority of the Radicals vote against the Government. He may hope to avert that by presenting a Government programme of domestic reforms which most of the Radicals will be obliged to support, but it seems almost impossible that he can permanently avoid the choice between the Radicals and the Right.

* * *

As our readers are aware, we do not rate very high the chance that a Reparations settlement will be evolved by the new committee of experts. But the appointment of Sir Josiah Stamp and Lord Revelstoke as the British members of the Committee at least encourage the hope that the best use will be made of whatever chance there is. The Dawes scheme which for the first time brought sense into the handling of the Reparations question was the work of Sir Josiah Stamp more than of any other man, and it was no small achievement to evolve a scheme which satisfied the previously incompatible conditions of being practical politics and practicable economics. The atmosphere in which the Dawes Committee met was more favourable, however, to a settlement than that under which the new committee will meet; for the very smoothness with which the Dawes Plan has worked has led to a recrudescence of extravagant notions of Reparations possibilities. We may feel sure that no such extravagant notions will be countenanced by the British representatives; and that if any new plan is agreed to, it will be one that will work.

* * *

The last of the European women and children who were endangered by the Afghan disturbances have been removed by the Royal Air Force. The danger of complications arising out of the massacre or imprisonment of Europeans is therefore at an end, and the British Government can watch the struggle between the Amir and his subjects as a disinterested party. The position seems to be roughly as follows. The first onslaught of the rebel tribes carried them right up to Kabul; the provincial garrisons and troops appear to have been slack and indifferent; but at Kabul a Praetorian guard of faithful regiments rallied round the Amir and held the rebels. They are being given bonuses in the approved style of the later emperors. Lack of regular supplies, and cold weather, have now checked the rebels; they will, probably, retire to their mountains and decide, in the spring, whether the times are propitious for another armed protest against the Amir's novelties. The Amir has, therefore, saved his crown, but his authority over large sections has come to an end, and it will be a long time before it can be reasserted.

* * *

The British Government is therefore confronted with the possibility of all those complications which arise automatically when there is prolonged disorder in a buffer State between two empires. The rebellion, it appears, is not a mere tribal affair; it is a real protest against the European habits of the monarch and the European tendencies of his system of government. There are no possible bonds of union between the wild fanatics in revolt and the border Powers. The same cannot be said with regard to the Amir. He paid a ceremonial visit to Moscow during his European tour, and is strongly suspected of the wish to play the hereditary Afghan game of setting London against Moscow

and Moscow against London, if he finds it convenient. If his Government is stable and recognized, the game is not particularly dangerous; but it is another matter if he gets into real difficulties. He will then be tempted to turn to the favourite expedient of distressed Oriental rulers: an appeal for aid from some foreign Power in the practical form of arms, munitions, and a mission of military advisers. If such an appeal were lodged at Moscow, the complications that would follow are obvious. The authority of the British Minister, who is universally respected, may prevent matters from taking this nasty turn, even if the revolt again becomes dangerous; but an unpopular ruler of an unsettled buffer State always creates an ugly situation, and ugly situations need watching.

* * *

The Soviet Government has made a surprise suggestion to Poland that the two Governments should sign a protocol, affirming that the obligations of the Kellogg Pact are already binding on them, without awaiting its ratification by the other signatories. The same proposal has been made to Lithuania, and will be extended to the other border States when they have adhered to the Pact. The Polish Government has not yet replied, and will probably consult Washington, Paris, and London before doing so; but the proposal is, in any event, interesting, more especially if it may be read as foreshadowing a possible further move on the part of Soviet Russia towards a system of regional guarantees along its western frontier. It may also be construed as, in some degree, a challenge to the sincerity of the other signatory Powers, similar to that thrown down by the Soviet disarmament proposals. These fall to be considered by the Preparatory Commission at their next session, which has now been fixed for April 15th. It will be easy for the Commission to demonstrate the impracticability of the Soviet proposals; but the position of the remaining Powers will not be altogether comfortable if they are still unable to agree on any substantial measures of disarmament in their place.

* * *

The Special Committee of the Pan-American Conference, charged with the duty of arbitrating between Paraguay and Bolivia, has taken very prompt and efficient steps to settle the frontier and outpost warfare which endangered a peaceful regulation of the dispute. The Committee has drafted a protocol which limits their terms of reference solely to an investigation and settlement of recent incidents. Both countries concerned are expected to agree to it; and from the moment of agreement the danger of further military clashes for the possession of fortified posts will be at an end. It was these conflicts which were for the moment most dangerous; for whilst the Committee were sitting another fort was reported to have changed hands. The arbitrators have shown very great wisdom in restricting their immediate inquiries; for, if their first findings establish even a provisional frontier between Bolivia and Paraguay, the dispute will be in a fair way towards settlement, and it should be easy to get the two Governments to agree to a more comprehensive plan of arbitration. It is indeed to be hoped that the authority, which the Pan-American Conference may justly acquire by their dealings in the matter, will expedite an arbitral settlement of all outstanding frontier disputes in South America. The Tacna-Arica business might be referred to them with advantage.

* * *

The text of the new Anglo-Chinese treaty and its annexes, which has now been published, confirms the forecast summarized in our last issue, with two rather

important additions. Full autonomy is conceded to China in respect of tonnage dues, as well as Customs duties. The Chinese Government declares its intention to apply the new tariff uniformly to all goods imported by land or sea, thus abolishing the preference at present given to goods imported across the land frontiers. What effect this treaty, and those recently concluded with other Powers, will have on foreign trade in China depends, of course, to a very large extent on the success of the Chinese Government in fulfilling its promise to abolish the vexatious internal duties, such as *likin*, which have done so much to impede trade in the past. The task is not an easy one; but the prestige derived from the treaties, and from the British recognition of Nanking, should assist the Government in asserting its authority in the provinces. It is significant that the agreement with Great Britain has been followed almost immediately by the decision of Chang Hseuh-ling and the other Manchurian leaders to acknowledge allegiance to Nanking.

The action of the Manchurian leaders will probably be very unwelcome to the Japanese Government, who have hitherto persuaded the authorities at Mukden to hold aloof from Nationalist China; but so long as order is preserved there seem to be no valid grounds for intervention, or even protest, by Tokyo. Nevertheless, Japanese irritation may render the present negotiations with Nanking more difficult, and unless Japan is brought into line with the other Powers by February 1st, when the new tariff comes into force, an awkward situation will be created. There is another cloud on the horizon in the resignation of Mr. A. H. F. Edwards, Officiating Inspector-General of the Maritime Customs, on the ground of official interference, tending to undermine the efficiency of the service.

The Yugoslav Cabinet of Father Koroshetz, which has done so much to make the Croat question insoluble, has resigned as the result of an internal split between the Radicals, who assert the extreme Serbian point of view, and the Democrats, who favour concessions to the Croats, and King Alexander is at present engaged in trying to find the elements of a Government capable of carrying on. The Croat leaders have announced their willingness to go to Belgrade for a conference, so long as the conference is summoned by the King; they refuse absolutely to discuss anything with the Serb party leaders. Further, they will enter into no discussion, unless their demand for federal autonomy is conceded, in principle, in advance. The Serb party leaders are beginning to talk of a dissolution, and a revision of the Constitution; but insist that the Croats must first set out their full demands in detail. It is clear that both sides will have to bring their extremists under control before any step forward can be taken. Meanwhile, it is perhaps a sign of the times that M. Ratchich, the murderer of the Croat deputies, is at last to be brought to trial.

So long as both the Serb and the Croat leaders adhere to their present uncompromising attitude, the position in Yugoslavia must be regarded as critical, for a continuance of the present tension will inevitably increase the intensity of the passions excited on both sides. Nevertheless, the Italians, at any rate, seem to be fairly confident as to the stability of the Triune Kingdom, for they have invited Belgrade to enter into very important negotiations. The pact of friendship between Italy and Yugoslavia, signed in 1924, will shortly expire, and it is understood that M. Rakitch, the Yugoslav Minister to the Quirinal, suggested its

renewal, and that Signor Mussolini replied that the existing treaty had been drafted in very general terms, and ought to be replaced by a more specific and detailed compact, providing for the amicable settlement of all known causes and opportunities for controversy between the two nations. This would appear to be a wise and statesmanlike proposal; but it is hard to see how any Government at Belgrade could negotiate such a treaty successfully without the co-operation of the Croats, who are intensely interested in the Dalmatian question.

The Indian National Congress has accepted Mr. Gandhi's resolution in favour of accepting Dominion status, with a reservation that, unless this should be granted within the next twelve months, the Congress should base its future policy on the demand for complete independence. Mr. Gandhi is reported to have promised that this programme, if honestly pursued, would bring Swaraj within a year. An amendment declaring that "there can be no true freedom without the severance of the British connection" was defeated by 1,350 votes to 973. The Indian Liberal Federation has also passed a resolution in favour of Dominion status, and another endorsing the boycott of the Simon Commission. Simultaneously, the All-India Moslem Conference has produced a resolution, covering 2½ pages of closely typed foolscap, which declares for a Federal System, with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the Constituent States, and sets out a long list of safeguards for the interests of the Moslem population, without which no Constitution, by whomsoever it may be devised, can be accepted. Meanwhile, the Simon Commission goes on its patient way.

Educational conferences are always a traditional feature of the first week of the New Year. During the present week, the annual Conference of Educational Associations has been held at University College, the Headmasters' Association has met in Cambridge, the Assistant Masters' Association at Brighton, the National Union of Women Teachers at Buxton, the Art Teachers' Guild at Birmingham, and the Independent Schools' Association in London. At most of these meetings some very interesting addresses have been delivered; and the general trend of the discussions, and the widespread interest taken in them, are significant of the lively interest in educational questions which is so marked to-day. The ferment of ideas in the educational world is, indeed, one of the healthiest phenomena of the present time. The centre of interest has passed from questions of an organizational character to the first principles of education itself; and there can be little doubt that we are on the threshold of a great period of educational advance. The much more active interest which modern parents take in the way the schools to which they send their children are conducted would be enough to ensure this. The remarkable success of "Young Woodley" at the Savoy Theatre signifies more than the discovery of a talented new playwright. It signifies a complete change in the uncritical complacency with which the middle-class public were wont to regard the public schools.

Our issue of next week will see the beginning of a new feature of THE NATION, a weekly article on Bridge by an exceptionally able writer. In our issue of January 19th, Mr. J. M. Keynes, in an article entitled "Is There Enough Gold?", will discuss the question of the adequacy of the existing world's gold supply in relation to the regulations by which note issues are governed, and the policies which Central Banks pursue.

AN APPEAL TO MR. CHAMBERLAIN

IN four Parliamentary days just before Christmas, no fewer than fifty-three clauses of the colossal and controversial Local Government Bill passed through Committee of the House of Commons under the guillotine. The reports which the Press has given to the proceedings have been bald and scanty in the extreme, so that even most well-informed students of affairs must be unaware of what has been taking place. As we suggested in a note last week, the rapidity and obscurity of the process deserve remark. For the clauses which have been disposed of with such convenient unobtrusiveness are far from being unimportant or undisputed. On the contrary, they raise a complicated series of considerable issues. Should the Boards of Guardians be abolished? If so, should their functions be transferred *en bloc* to the County Councils? If, in general, the County Council is the most appropriate Poor Law authority, should not exceptions be made in the case of the larger non-county boroughs? What administrative arrangements should be prescribed for the discharge by the County Councils of their new duties, so as to ensure, for example, that the services of women shall still be utilized? Should the whole work of maintaining the roads also be transferred to the County Councils? These are some of the more important points raised by that part of the Local Government Bill which has already passed through Committee. The Government's proposals under most of these heads have been the subject of prolonged and vehement criticism outside Parliament. They have now received the sanction of the House of Commons, under conditions which were incompatible with any adequate or serious discussion.

The tendency for the effective control over legislation to pass from Parliament to the executive has been so long in operation, and has gone so far, that most people merely shrug their shoulders when the topic is mentioned. But the course of the Local Government Bill represents, as it seems to us, a new and disconcerting development in the general tendency. We have long come to recognize that, when Government Bills are discussed, no speeches made in the House of Commons will influence divisions. Moreover, with the dwindling space given to Parliament in the newspapers, the power of an eloquent or cogent speech by an individual member to influence outside opinion has correspondingly declined. None the less, the general course of a Parliamentary debate has hitherto played a central part in the process of public controversy and discussion. It has been to the House of Commons, in the main, that the public has turned for the responsible statement of the pros and cons of an important measure, and for the cut and thrust which will bring out the significance of disputed points. The House has certainly not discharged this function as regards the first half of the Local Government Bill. Nor is it easy to see how it could discharge it under the drastic guillotine conditions that obtain.

The first half of the Local Government Bill, which the House of Commons has disposed of so quickly and so easily, will be a source of an infinitude of trouble

and confusion to our local authorities for a long time to come. The time has passed, however, for the profitable discussion of this portion of the Bill. It is important now to concentrate attention on the portion which remains—the clauses dealing with de-rating, the “formula,” and the abolition of percentage grants. Possibly, on this part of the Bill, the House of Commons in Committee may be more successful both in informing the public mind and in securing desirable amendments.

There are two points in particular which, in our judgment, it is desirable to press, viz., (1) the purposes to which Mr. Chamberlain proposes to apply his famous formula, and (2) the abolition of the percentage grants for the health services. The former is a matter on which, indeed, it is not very likely that the Government will give way, but which it is important to bring home clearly to the public mind. On the second, we think it not impossible to persuade the Government to make valuable concessions.

It will be observed that we state the first point in terms not of the intrinsic merits of the formula, but of the purposes to which it is to be applied. For, on this matter, confusion is general, and extends apparently to Mr. Chamberlain himself. The reason why the financial redistribution, under the Government's scheme, is so grotesquely anomalous is not that the formula (if rightly applied) is a bad one, or that it is complicated, or that it is expressed in terms of algebra, but that it is applied to purposes for which it is utterly unsuited. The formula is to govern the distribution to the various local authorities of £45 millions. This sum is made up of three parts: (1) £24 millions to replace the loss of local revenue through “de-rating,” (2) £16 millions to replace various discontinued grants-in-aid, and (3) £5 millions of new money. It should have been obvious to Mr. Chamberlain from the first that the criteria which will make for the most equitable distribution of (2) and (3) cannot possibly be the right criteria by which to distribute (1). There is, indeed, only one sensible principle by which to distribute (1), namely, to make good to each local authority its exact loss under the de-rating scheme. If Mr. Chamberlain had done this, and had used his formula to distribute (2) and (3), he might still have got into trouble in those localities which would have lost under the arrangement, but the redistribution would have been of a clearly equitable character.

But by using the formula to distribute (1) as well, Mr. Chamberlain ensures a chaotically anomalous result. It does not matter how perfect his formula may be as a measure of local “needs.” A wealthy residential or commercial district, which has neither industry nor agriculture, loses no revenue by derating, and *must* therefore gain substantially under head (1), and it follows inexorably that the more industrial regions must tend to lose. In short, the redistribution effected under (1) is in the opposite direction to that of equity and common sense; and, when (2) and (3) are thrown in, it becomes a matter of chance whether the localities with the greatest needs gain or lose on balance. That is why the formula produces such puzzling and paradoxical results.

What is Mr. Chamberlain's answer to this criticism? So far he has not really attempted any. He expatiates on the merits of his formula as a measure of local needs; but he never discusses it in relation to the purposes for which he is going to use it. He has indeed observed, when urged to compensate separately and directly for derating, that his object is to effect a fairer distribution of grants-in-aid, and that the redistribution would be less substantial if the derating money were

excluded from the general pool. This would only be valid, if the application of the formula to the derating money made for a fairer distribution. But, as it does the opposite, the redistribution effected by the formula would, we suspect, be greater, as well as far more equitable, if the local authorities were compensated directly for the revenue they lose by derating. It would be simple for the Ministry of Health to work it out and see. We hope that the Opposition parties will press Mr. Chamberlain closely on this point in Committee.

To exclude the derating money from the scope of the formula would be a perfectly feasible change which would conflict with none of Mr. Chamberlain's principles, and would immensely improve the Bill. But there does not seem much chance of the Government's accepting this proposal. The plan of the Bill is attributable to sheer muddle-headedness, and, we believe, to nothing else. Mr. Chamberlain, as he has told us, has not a mathematical mind. But, at this stage of the controversy, Ministers will be extremely loth to admit this muddle-headedness to themselves, much less to the general public.

On the second question, however, to which we now turn, we hope that it may not be in vain to urge concessions. The proposal to merge in the new block grant the percentage grants hitherto paid for the health services is calculated to arrest or to impede the development of services which, in Mr. Chamberlain's own words, are "among the most valuable which the community can provide." This is the view, not merely of political partisans, but of many of those whose experience of local government entitles them to speak with authority. The point is a simple one. At present local authorities are encouraged to initiate infant welfare centres or maternity schemes by the knowledge that the Government will contribute pound for pound, and under the new arrangements, this inducement will altogether disappear.

The force of this consideration is so obvious as to make it difficult to reconcile the proposal with a sincere desire for the promotion of these services. Indeed, as one of the declared reasons for the change is that the present system encourages "extravagance," it has been natural to assume that the Government wish to slow down the rate at which the health services expand. In recent utterances, however, Mr. Chamberlain has warmly repudiated this suggestion. "No one," he writes in an article in the current *NINETEENTH CENTURY*, "attaches more importance to these services than I do. . . . It would indeed be disastrous if they were to suffer a check." But he is convinced that "so far from suffering by the change, these services will gain." How can they possibly gain? How can it stimulate their development to withdraw all inducement to develop them? Mr. Chamberlain's answer is that at present many local authorities are too poor to undertake these services, so that the pound for pound inducement fails to effect its purpose. By redistributing the grants in accordance with the formula of "needs," he will remove this "excuse of poverty," and be in a stronger position than now to ginger up the backward authorities.

This argument takes us back to the merits of the redistribution which the formula will effect. In the textile districts, for example, it does not seem likely that the "excuse of poverty" will be mitigated. But we wish now to urge a different point. Of the £16 millions of discontinued grants, the health services account altogether for only £4 millions, and the services, which it is just now especially important to encourage, namely, maternity and child welfare, for only £1 mil-

lion. Why should Mr. Chamberlain not agree to leave these latter grants on their present basis? The pool to be distributed under the formula would then be £44 millions instead of £45 millions. Clearly this would not be fatal to Mr. Chamberlain's object of a better distribution. On the other hand, the strong incentive of the pound for pound grant would then remain.

Mrs. E. D. Simon has made this suggestion in a recent letter to the *TIMES*. We urge it very seriously on Mr. Chamberlain's attention. He must admit that there is at least a risk that the health services may be checked by removing the inducement of the percentage grant. Here is a means by which this risk can be avoided, while his general scheme is left intact. The concession is one which he might well make with a good grace.

KILLING NO MURDER

PERHAPS the verdict in the trial of Di Modugno, who assassinated Count Nardini, the Italian Vice-Consul in Paris, would have excited less indignation in Italy had it been recognized that it was quite in accordance with precedent. Most people in Paris expected Di Modugno to be acquitted, as he no doubt would have been, but for the fact that his unfortunate victim had no responsibility for the ill-treatment of Di Modugno and his wife by the Italian Government. Nobody brought any pressure on the jury to induce them to deal leniently with the prisoner, nor was such pressure necessary or even possible. Had there been any, it would have been in the opposite sense, for the result of the trial was most distasteful to the French Government, but French juries are not amenable to pressure, and any attempt to use it would probably have the opposite result to that desired. The Presiding Judge was evidently hostile to Di Modugno, and the Court inflicted the maximum sentence for the offence of which the jury convicted him—that of wounding without premeditation or intention to kill and without incapacitating the victim! The jury had sent for the Presiding Judge and asked him what sentence he would inflict if they found Di Modugno guilty of manslaughter, and, on his refusal to say, found a verdict that prevented a heavier sentence than two years' imprisonment. The attitude of the jury was the normal attitude of a French jury in cases of political assassination. It seems to have been forgotten that the assassin of Jaurès was acquitted on the ground that his motives were patriotic, and that much more recently a Parisian jury acquitted the Ukrainian Jew who avenged his massacred co-religionists by assassinating Petlura. The proceedings at the trial were equally normal. A French prisoner does not plead guilty or not guilty, but Di Modugno's counsel admitted that his client had killed Count Nardini, and the defence was a justification of the act. There being no dispute about the facts, the trial took the form of a debate on the Fascist regime, and all the evidence would no doubt have been ruled out as irrelevant by an English judge, for the witnesses made political speeches to the jury. But this is the normal procedure in France.

The importance of this case is in the fact that it is typical. There are two categories of murder with which French juries habitually deal leniently—political assassinations and what are called crimes of passion. It is no doubt for this reason that both categories are relatively common in France. Anybody wishing to assassinate a political opponent would be foolish to do it in any other country if he could help it. Impunity for political assassinations is, however, much less serious than impunity for murders

classed as crimes of passion, for the former are, after all, rare, whereas the latter occur every day and are becoming more and more numerous. The category of crimes of passion has been so much enlarged since the war that it now includes almost any murder of a husband by a wife, a mistress by a lover, and *vice versa*, whatever the motive may be, whereas formerly it was at least necessary that the victim should have been unfaithful or have given cause for reasonable resentment in some way. Human life has become very cheap in France since the war, and the leniency of juries has something to do with it.

In a recent case the wife of a Lycée professor informed her husband, from whom she was living apart, that she proposed to kill him because she knew she would be acquitted. She then waited for him at an Underground station in Paris and shot him dead in cold blood. She was not in fact acquitted, but the jury returned such a verdict that she escaped with five years' imprisonment, although it was proved that her motive was merely that her husband had refused her request to increase her allowance, and all the evidence showed that the faults were on her side. Some time ago the wife of a wealthy citizen of Roubaix, belonging to a highly respected and pious family, shot her daughter-in-law dead in cold blood during a drive in her son's car merely because she considered her to be "modern," frivolous, and extravagant. This lady sought divine guidance at a roadside shrine before committing an act which she apparently looked upon as the just execution of a rebel against traditions of the French family, and she, too, was convinced up to the last that she would be acquitted. She was disappointed, however, for she was condemned to death, and, the sentence having been commuted in accordance with the French practice of not guillotining women, is now serving a life sentence. Evidently the Roubaix jury thought that a daughter-in-law came within the prohibited degrees. It may safely be said that, if the lady had not expected to be acquitted, her daughter-in-law would still be alive.

The expectation of acquittal in these two cases was fully justified, for French juries usually acquit when the murder is a family affair. They stick, however, as a rule at murders of small children. Of four women now under sentence of death in Paris and its immediate neighbourhood, three murdered children. The fourth killed her husband, but she was convicted at Versailles, and juries in Seine-et-Oise are proverbially more severe than Parisian juries. Besides, she did not observe the etiquette in such matters, which prescribes the use of an automatic pistol, preferably of elegant make with a mother-of-pearl handle. French juries dislike any other method of disposing of an inconvenient relative, and the lady at Versailles suffocated her husband with gas during his sleep, while she sat in the next room awaiting the result. Sometimes, however, even murderers of children get off lightly, like the provincial count the other day who got ten years for throwing his illegitimate baby into a river to save thirty shillings a month for its maintenance. Snobbery was undoubtedly a factor in the leniency of the jury in his case, and, in general, there is too much "class justice" in France. French juries are empanelled in such a way as to exclude workmen, and they are inclined to be particularly lenient to persons of good social position. The wife of the Lycée professor already mentioned was no more excusable than the four women now under sentence of death, but the latter are on a lower social scale.

It is not surprising that murders are on the increase in France and that one can hardly ever open one's morning paper without finding three or four reported, usually in a short paragraph in some obscure corner of the paper, for,

unless there is something unusual about the circumstances or the position of the persons concerned, they attract so little attention that they are not worth "splashing." French justice is ineffective because it is capricious and uncertain. Whatever may be thought about the deterrent effect of any penalty, it is clear that certainty is the most important factor in it. An English murderer knows that, if he is caught, he will be hanged. A French murderer knows that it is ten to one that he will not be guillotined, and that he has always a chance of getting off altogether. If the murder is *en famille*, the chances are ten to one in favour of acquittal. The result of a murder trial depends on the locality, the social position of the accused, his or her relationship to the victim, and various other irrelevant circumstances. In some parts of France juries refuse to allow a death sentence in any case, and therefore find "extenuating circumstances" to prevent it, even when they are conspicuously absent. The murderers guillotined are far from being always the most brutal or the least excusable. This inequality is grossly unjust, and there can be no doubt that it would be better in France to abolish the death penalty, since the unwillingness of juries to allow it is increasing, and it has ceased to be a deterrent, if it ever was one.

Whether its abolition would make the administration of justice more regular is, however, doubtful, seeing that juries so often acquit a prisoner whose guilt is admitted, although they can already save him from the guillotine by finding extenuating circumstances. French opinion is at last becoming concerned at the increase in murders, especially crimes of passion, and various suggestions have been made for reforming the judicial system. One is that the Court should consult the jury about the penalty, but that would hardly help matters. In practice the jury already has a voice, at any rate in deciding the maximum penalty, as the case of Di Modugno shows. A French jury is not called upon merely to say whether a prisoner is guilty or not guilty of the crime of which he is accused. It is called upon to answer a number of questions, such as whether there was premeditation, whether there was intention to kill, and so on, and by its answers to these questions the jury may, as in the case of Di Modugno, find a prisoner guilty only of unlawfully wounding, even though he has in effect pleaded guilty to murder. If, however, this system were abandoned in favour of the English system, the result would certainly be an increase in the number of acquittals, especially if the death penalty were retained.

For my part, I doubt whether any legal changes will solve what is in fact a psychological problem. One cause of the uncertainty of French justice is the susceptibility of the French to oratory. A counsel for the defence, if he is a brilliant orator, can make the jury forget the victim, and move them to tears for the sufferings of the prisoner and his family, and there is no summing-up to correct the impression or warn the jury against irrelevant considerations. Leniency in crimes of passion is due to a strange sentimentalism and an inadequate recognition of individual rights. The idea that a wife is the property of her husband seems to linger on the English judicial bench, for I read a few days ago that a judge in the Divorce Court had lamented the fact that a man could be sent to prison for stealing another man's watch, but not for stealing his wife. That idea, however, cannot be said to influence French juries, who are even more lenient to murderous wives than to murderous husbands. Perhaps they think that each is the property of the other.

The root cause of the caprice of French juries is, however, no doubt a lack of civism—of a sense of public duty. French jurymen do not seem to think that they have any

responsibility to the public, or that their verdict must be in accordance with the law or the facts of the case. No doubt there are circumstances in which juries should disregard the law, as they did in England in the days of Wilkes, and there are cases of political assassination, for instance, in which for my part I should not hesitate to acquit, although there was no doubt of the prisoner's legal guilt. But, if the law is bad, there are means in a country like France of getting it altered and, if it is going to be an accepted doctrine in France that a husband and wife or a lover and mistress may kill each other with impunity, it would be better to amend the law in that sense.

ROBERT DELL.

THE OUTLOOK FOR THE NORTH-EAST COAST

THE rest of the country appears to be waking up at last to the seriousness of the plight in which the north-east corner of England is to-day, and has been for a good while past. Newspapers have organized Christmas parcel funds for the miners; there is the Mansion House Fund; and the Society of Friends is active, as it always is when calamity falls upon any part of the earth. The Government has announced its intention of giving monetary help, and help also in personnel for administration. It is to be hoped that the various funds will be wisely administered; many of us remember times of distress in East London and elsewhere when the distribution of relief was by no means an unmixed blessing. But the raising of this money is at least a sign of awareness of the situation, and a gesture of sympathy which will be much appreciated.

What a great many persons in the South do not yet seem to realize is that there are sufferers in other industries than the coal industry. Newburn, a little town on the Tyne, almost all of whose inhabitants were employed at the local steel works, is as hard hit as any mining village; the steel works, idle for several years past, are now being dismantled. The shipbuilding town of Jarrow has had at least a third of its adult population out of work in every year save one since 1922. Scotswood and Elswick, great working-class districts of Newcastle, used to depend for livelihood upon the huge firm of Armstrong, Whitworth, whose difficulties are well known.

It is important, therefore, to realize that the distress is by no means confined to the miners. It is important also to realize that it has already lasted for a long time; this is even more true of the shipyard workers and metal workers than it is of the miners. Resources have long since been used up; the marvel is that the morale of the area is to-day as good as it is.

It is most important of all to have a conception as to what may and what may not be expected in the future. From time to time some local newspaper has a leader or article, or some local personage makes a speech, to the effect that trade is mending, and that the end of the bad times is in sight. "There will be no boom," the cautious person usually adds. Such utterances have been rather fewer of late; they have been falsified so often.

Are we not, then, to believe in the possibility of recovery for the North-East Coast? Certainly we may believe that better times will come again, provided we understand the conditions which must be fulfilled. It is quite clear, for instance, that we can only expect a partial recovery of the great staple industries on which the area depended so largely in the last half century. It is most unlikely that this country will ever again build 80 per cent. of the world's new shipping tonnage, as it once did.

It is practically certain that the Tyne will never again have the building and the armouring of the Japanese navy or of any other great foreign navy. Our own naval requirements will be less. Armament firms cannot expect a future to match the years when Europe was preparing for Armageddon. And the Northumberland and Durham coalfields are old coalfields, struggling desperately against new competitors at home and abroad.

If there were only the old industries to which to look, the outlook would be black indeed. But there seems to be no reason why the North-East Coast should not have a wider range of industries in the future than it has had for many years past. The three or four great industries employed a much larger proportion of its population in 1911 than in 1881. Minor industries had stood still or had decayed. There was probably no great area in this country more closely specialized than was the North-East Coast at the outbreak of the war, and the war increased its specialization.

Evidence of this is easily obtainable from the Industry Tables of the last Census. There are in this country many industries which are not strongly localized, but are to be found in larger or smaller volume in every great industrial area. Such are the food industries; many of the lighter metal industries; printing, and the manufacture of paper derivatives; and a number of minor industries such as the making of brooms and brushes, of toys and sports requisites, or of umbrellas. These industries, and many others, were much under-represented on the North-East Coast as compared with the other great industrial areas. There was also less than the usual amount of market gardening and poultry farming in the hinterland of the densely populated urban areas; and the deficiency cannot be adequately explained by difficulties of climate.

The North-East Coast has now got to reverse its overspecialization, and there is no reason why it should not do so. There will be many difficulties, and it will not happen rapidly. But the pace will be quicker if all parties concerned realize the need and show themselves adaptable.

Two things should be added. Nothing much can happen until the rates question is settled; and if the Government scheme should break down, as it well may do, there should be no delay in the adoption of an alternative. Secondly, the North-East Coast has a birth-rate much in excess of that of most parts of the country; partial recovery of the old industries, and some development of new industries will not obviate the need for considerable and continuous migration for some decades to come.

HENRY A. MESS.

"CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR—"

THE market had branched and budded down the neighbouring streets. The edge of the crowd where I first penetrated it was a little irritable. A mother was informing a small boy that she would not have believed it of him; a piece of news that, it must be said, he received with perfect equanimity. Just in front of me an old woman was repeating like a chant to someone in front of her, "You know very well if your pore mother was alive—" A stall keeper was grumbling that people did not shop late these days, not as they used to; no one apparently having bought of him early or late. Another, however, was taking a more cheerful view of life, and shouting, "'Ere you are; walnuts and old brandy, six a 'alf pound, walnuts and old brandy."

Two small boys were lingering by a small shop window. "Oo—crackers," said the younger, about nine years old,

gazing at the glittering rows. "Watcher want with crackers?" demanded the elder scornfully. "'Spouse I am a bit old fer crackers," said the first in a rather small voice, and the two trailed away, passing indifferently a hawker who proclaimed, "The laugh of the year, a pound note for a penny."

The permanent core of the market, a double row of stalls down a street, was yelling itself hoarse: "Chest-nuts," "Nice chickens," "Buy now, ladies, it'll all be gone soon," "Best meat in the market," "'Ere's a balloon for the kids." They were obliged to shout, because round the corner the invading cheapjacks were compensating themselves for worse lighting and narrower pavement by a double exercise of lung power.

"Makes you rich in a very short time," proclaimed an old gentleman with a sort of stand and yards and yards of flex which he was slowly disentangling. "That's what it does, ladies and gentlemen. You wait till I show you." He pushed a plug into a socket, but darkness continued. Selecting another from his pockets he repeated, "In a very short time, the wealth producer," but the crowd drifted on to his neighbour, who was waving an unconvincing-looking lamp in the air, showing a faint, nervous flame. "Three dozen o' these I sold at Covent Garden this morning. Three dozen. 'Ow many? I said thirty-six. Costs a 'apney an hour. Five shillings. Thirty-six at five shillings I sold. O no, madam, I assure you, makes no smoke. Three dozen I sold at five shillings."

Next him, in front of the darkened window of an undertaker, a young man, having whitened his face, reddened his lips, blacked his eyelids, and put on a glengarry cap with a red tassel added, picked up pieces of glassware in assorted handfuls, or glass tumblers in rigid serpents, and waved them over his head, proclaiming bargains in sums that entirely defeated my arithmetic. "'Ere you are, splendid bargain, eight for one and six, eight for one and six; and what I say is, girls, if you want to get married, don't put it off—'ere's yours, miss, three for a shilling and a 'apeny, that's right—two dishes for elevenpence—now, you mothers, don't you start fighting, I can't bear fighting round my stall. So don't you start—three dishes for one and sevenpence, that's right, here you are, merry Christmas, nine tumblers for one and three—good strong ones see," tossing one in the air and catching it, "nine for one and three; O keep the paper underneath, you're always covering the stock with paper, think I'm a bloomin' newspaper stall—two dishes for you, yes, madam, here they are; now come on, this is something like Christmas."

"'Ere y'are, Christmas stockings, one and threepence, let you 'ave 'em for a shilling—yes, madam, these are the twopenny ones."

"Why do I want to go 'ome?" demanded a tall, bony woman, with her arms full of sliding parcels. "Why, because I want some o' the things there is to be done to get done before midnight. See?"

LUCY MASTERMAN.

LIFE AND POLITICS

THE King's illness continues to overshadow everything. There has been nothing comparable in anyone's experience to the long-drawn tension and uncertainty of this terrible illness. For all these dreary weeks millions of people have been hanging on the bulletins; people whose interest or whose sympathy makes the King's condition a matter of real concern. As is well known, the King, in three separate crises, probably more, has been coaxed back from the edge of the grave by the utmost

efforts of the best medical science and nursing, and even now, some six weeks since the illness began, as I write this in the early part of the week, there is once more the greatest anxiety, for it is feared that he has no reserve of strength left to survive another relapse. The public remains uneasy about the bulletins, not for what they say, but because they leave so much unsaid. People feel the want of such knowledge of the King's condition as five minutes talk with the family of a sick person of one's acquaintance would supply. The gap in knowledge is naturally filled by the wildest rumours which no newspaper, however "sensational," dares to publish. One curious circumstance is that ordinary folk judge of the King's state, not from the wording of the bulletins, but from the number of doctors who sign them. A bulletin signed by five doctors is generally taken to mean grave news, whatever its contents. Meanwhile, as the nation waits for the issue of this amazing struggle against death, there is everywhere a new and perfectly just appreciation of the merits of King George. It is recognized by all that he has acquitted himself with remarkable skill in the difficult, delicate, and thankless job of constitutional monarch. Again and again during his reign pitfalls have opened in his path, and he has shown tact and good sense in superlative degree in avoiding them. The mind of a king in these times works in a carefully sustained seclusion and silence. We know enough to be sure that King George has always played the game.

The four pending by-elections are not, so far, rousing much interest. The feeling about them is that it is an intolerable nuisance that the parties should be forced to undertake the worry and expense of contests so near to the General Election, and on an obsolescent register. Arrangements not to fight would be welcome enough, no doubt, but hardly possible. Gentlemen's agreements in such matters are not practical politics in an era of three parties, if they ever were in the era of two parties. Not only will all four seats be fought, but there is the prospect of a rough-and-tumble struggle of four candidates in each constituency. I note with interest in the case of Bishop Auckland, the latest example of the now fashionable device of putting up a wife to keep a seat "warm" for her husband. All the parties have adopted this method, and however questionable it may be, it has evidently taken root in our politics. I do not care very much for it myself; there is, I think, about it too much of the suggestion of a Parliamentary seat as a family possession. I should have thought too that election as a stop-gap would not much appeal to women of high spirits and attainments, who are well qualified—as Mrs. Dalton no doubt is—to make useful members on their own account. The corrective will probably be found in the extremely human tendency of women elected under these circumstances to discover, when they are in the House of Commons, that they are destined for a career above that of a "warming pan." They have been known to develop a strong liking for being Members of Parliament, and to show a disconcerting determination to remain.

It is just seven years since the foundation of the Irish Free State, and one notes a natural tendency in the Irish Press and among Irish people to take stock of the position. Seven years of home rule have at the least lifted Southern Ireland—I believe this convenient term is disliked over there—from the lowest pit of misery and angry passions to the plane of dignity and national self-possession. The most suggestive piece of stocktaking that I have seen is an article in the IRISH STATESMAN, that excellent journal, which is the expression of the mind, at once idealistic and practical, of "A.E." This constructive critic of his country finds cause for satisfaction in the fact that the nation has settled

down to practical business—"The passionate moods that preceded the Treaty, with their high idealism and their devilry," have subsided. It is good news for humanity that the Celtic Irish, famous in *English* history for their love of political abstractions and emotional extravagance, are peaceably concentrating upon the job of creating an efficient and self-supporting agricultural community. The Free State to-day gives its energies to such humdrum affairs as the organization of the farmers, the Shannon scheme, the sugar beet industry, and better eggs, cattle, and pigs. In short, the Free State is setting a useful example of how to beat gunmetal into pruning hooks. The old disregard of human life has given place, as the *IRISH STATESMAN* remarks, to a national hatred of violence; there is no real physical force party left in their politics. If I were an Irishman I should be proud of this profound and salutary change in the national psychology. May an Englishman add the hope—with the Censorship Bill in mind—that the Free State will never become a country where:—

"... priests in black gowns [are] walking their rounds
And binding in briars [men's] joys and desires."

The Bishop of London is certainly not the most discreet of ecclesiastics. Some of us like him none the less for that. He is emotional, impulsive, and rushes in regardless of critics and consequences when he feels deeply about some vice of society. It has always been his strength as a Bishop that he knows the poor and their needs at first hand. When he is found expressing vigorous opinions about the comparative failure of London's governors to house the poor, I, for one, listen to him with attention and a disposition to believe that he is, on the whole, right, however plausible may be the statistics of his critics. I see that he is being severely scolded because of the strictures on the London local authorities for their housing record which he has written in a letter to the clergy, intended to be read from the pulpit on Housing Sunday. The Bishop, of course, is talking about the slums; the inadequacy of the clearance work, and the failure to provide houses for the poorest people at rents which they can afford to pay. Without being an expert, I believe that he has a good case. It is useless for apologists to point, for example, to the 33,555 new houses which the L.C.C. has built. Houses for what class of the population and at what rents? For myself, I am not convinced by the indignation of the property owners and the official figures of the local authorities. I prefer to give my credence to a liberal critic, such as Mr. E. D. Simon, on this subject of whether the Housing Acts are or are not to a large extent a "dead letter" so far as the provision of cheap houses for the really poor is concerned.

I have no inside knowledge of the very remarkable crisis in the government of the Salvation Army. It chiefly interests me as an effort to introduce some measure of democracy into one of the few real autocracies still existing in the world. The Salvation Army was, from the first, organized strictly on the military model; the late General Booth was as completely autocratic as Ludendorff. What he said he said, and it was done. The unfortunate breakdown of the present General, an able and amiable man, but a less dominant personality than his father, has brought to a head the widespread and long-maturing dissatisfaction in the Army's world-wide society with the old-fashioned personal dominance. The Booth dynasty is in danger, and, curiously enough, the old General's forceful daughter Eva, the head of the Army in the U.S.A., has come over (if report is correct) to lead the constitutional reformers, whose basis of action is the curious legal document which was the product of the ingenuity of Haldane and Asquith. It will

be very interesting to see what comes of the meeting—the first in history—of the extraordinary "High Council" next week: whether General Booth is deposed, or whether some form of constitutional government is forced upon him. Nowadays the dynastic tradition has become somewhat flyblown, even in its last stronghold, the Salvation Army. The High Council seems somewhat to resemble a College of Cardinals meeting to appoint a Pope, with the difference that the throne is still occupied.

Sir Austen Chamberlain is not so starchy as is sometimes supposed. Behind the official façade of frockcoat, shiny hat, and monocle, he is quite a human being, somewhat pathetically imprisoned, it is true, in a sense of his own importance. They say he condescended with enjoyment among the film stars at Hollywood. And now we owe it to him that the Old Year, dismal enough in all conscience, goes out with a jest. Everyone is delighted to hear of the kindly interest taken by the Foreign Office, under Sir Austen, in the fortunes of our football teams. The F.O., it seems, has earnestly exhorted the F.A. to be careful to uphold British prestige among the sporting nations by sending abroad none but the best players. When this came to light, the F.O. anxiously issued a *démenti* or whatever it should be called; perhaps a dignity preserver. We shall refuse to abandon this new and pleasing proof of the humanity of Sir Austen and his grave advisers. It is all to their credit that they should be keen on the football returns and anxious for our success on the foreign fields. Examination of the results of the League must be in any case a pleasing relief from the contemplation of the British "results" in the other League. I hope Sir Austen will continue his benevolent interest in football. If he takes a little time off from high politics for the encouragement of the game, I do not know that the public will grumble. His achievements in the former sphere are well known; but things may be better in football. Sir Austen does not play.

I cannot see what business it is of the Government Departments to put the Civil Servants through an inquisition as to the manner in which they spend their time outside the office. The object of forcing them to disclose any paid work which they do is fairly obvious. It can hardly be anything but one of those clever Treasury schemes to rake in a little more income tax. The income-tax inquisition is now so pitiless and intolerable that decent citizens have almost reached the point of sympathizing with evaders, much as in the days of high Protection smuggling became romantically reputable. What the object of requiring Civil Servants to give an account of unpaid work done outside the office may be, I do not know, unless it is due to simple impertinent curiosity. Few heads of business, if any, would consider it right or seemly to inquire into the way their employees use their time away from the office. As it is, Civil Servants are subject to restrictions on their liberty which are not imposed on other workers. I am not surprised at hearing that this piece of official officiousness is much resented in Whitehall. One has only to think of the position of the distinguished writers who now, as at all periods in the past, are to be found among Civil Servants. One supposes that Mr. Humbert Wolfe will be called upon for an exact return of his earnings in the service (unofficial) of the Muse. It is refreshing to imagine the sort of reply Anthony Trollope would have made, in his Post Office days, to such a request.

We now know, from Mr. Baldwin himself, that he has "every confidence" in the judgment of the new "flapper" voters. Yes, but is it returned?

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE RIGHT WAY WITH THE
SAFEGUARDING DUTIES

SIR,—Your suggestion that we should use our present tariff for bargaining in the event of a Free Trade majority after the next election opens appalling vistas. One sees a Free Trade Government offering to lower a tariff by way of a bargain—and being refused. Would they then have to remain Protectionist: or succeeding—and then facing a loud and interested clamour to put on more tariffs for the same purpose?

The history of the McKenna duties is illuminating enough for most of us of the pitfalls that wait for any Free Trade Government that once even appears to play with Protection. Heaven forbid that we Liberals should entangle ourselves in that net again.—Yours, &c.,

RONALD F. WALKER.

Fir Cottage, Mirfield, Yorkshire.

[We suggest that our policy must be considered in the light of the situation created by the World Economic Conference. The Report of that Conference urged a general reduction of tariffs based on the principle of "parallel or concerted action"; and a special Committee has been appointed to secure that something comes of this recommendation. It seems to us desirable to link up any reduction which we are ready to make in our existing duties with this important international effort. To do so would not be exposed to the general objections to tariff bargaining which Mr. Walker indicates.—ED., NATION.]

LABOUR'S BELLICOSITY

SIR,—“Kappa” is quite capable of dealing by himself with any controversy he may raise, but will you allow one of the Liberal “500” to refer to a point arising out of Mrs. Swanwick's letter in your issue of December 22nd? This is the implied suggestion or innuendo that in some way the Labour Party is more peaceful than the Liberal Party in its international policy; a point she tries to support by referring to “a substantial number of Labour Members” who remained pacifist in the war, and to Liberals who became Labour on the same ground. Some of us meet this wholly unfounded case in our own divisions, where the less scrupulous Labour speakers put it quite bluntly that the Liberals caused the war and that there would have been no war if a Labour Government had been in power. It is high time that this base and spurious coin of controversy was nailed to the counter. What are the facts?

1. In October, 1914—after time for reflection and consideration—the Labour Party issued an official manifesto in vigorous support of the war. It includes the following sentences:—

“The Labour Party in the House of Commons, face to face with this situation, recognized that Great Britain, having exhausted the resources of peaceful diplomacy, was bound in honour, as well as by treaty, to resist the aggression of Germany. The Party realized that if England had not kept her pledges to Belgium, and had stood aside, the victory of the German army would have been probable, and the victory of Germany would mean the death of democracy in Europe.”

The document then refers to Labour support of war measures already given in Parliament and to its work on behalf of recruiting. It is signed by sixty-two Labour M.P.s and Trade-Union leaders, including Mr. Clynes, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Henderson.

2. In May, 1915, on the formation of the first Coalition, Labour entered the Government, and Mr. Henderson joined the Cabinet, not on any personal grounds, but as the official Labour representative. This Government passed compulsory military service, and Mr. Henderson, for Labour, spoke and voted for it.

3. In December, 1916, the Labour Party entered the second Coalition, and Mr. Henderson was one of the five members of the Cabinet. This Coalition, if I remember rightly, was formed for the express purpose of a more ruthless waging of war.

4. It may be that some Liberals gave peace as the excuse for leaving their own and joining the Socialist Party. Some

of them were certainly hard put to it to find an apparently respectable excuse for deserting their party in its darkest hour—now happily past. Deserters' excuses, however, are not infrequently dubious and unsound.

5. The real trouble is that on peace, as on other subjects, the Labour Party talks much but performs little. As a peace lover, I remain a Liberal because Liberalism has a real programme of peace and men capable of carrying it out. Labour has been tested, and was then unwilling or afraid (or both) to make good its words. In its only year of office it presented increased estimates for all the fighting services, although Germany was disarmed by land and sea. As one of its own recruits said (Mr. Wedgwood Benn):—

“The Labour Government have presented military estimates exceeding by £12,000,000 the expenditure of their predecessors. They have started a naval race in the building of new cruisers.”

On the building of five unnecessary and provocative cruisers they were directly challenged by the Liberals, and the Labour Whips were put on to force the programme through with Tory support.

6. Perhaps this explains your correspondent's difficulty about Mr. Ponsonby. This “out-and-out pacifist” was a member of the Government in 1924, he raised no voice against the cruisers, he remained a member of the Government afterwards. Can it be that the electors of Brightside do not take Mr. Ponsonby's pacifist protestations at their full face value? Perhaps, though they hear his words, they remember his deeds and feel safe.—Yours, &c.,

D. L. FINNEMORE.

2, Charles Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

December 25th, 1928.

NOVELS AND DECENCY

SIR,—There is a curious and dangerous ambiguity in Mr. Pollard's letter on this subject. Does he merely mean that novelists, like other writers, should write with a sense of responsibility on sex, as on other subjects, and that readers and reviewers should exercise their “moral judgment” on novels? If so, no one will disagree with him. Or does he mean that the novelist should be forbidden by the law to deal with sexual matters (“these things are forbidden to journalists”), except he treat them as “an intimate shrine whose beauty is profaned by those who cannot enter it with delicate and reverent steps,” and that anyone who does not do so should be brought “to the bar of some adjudicating authority”—i.e., of a police constable and a police magistrate? If so, he is advocating the worst possible form of Press censorship. The result of attempting to dictate to grown-up people what they may or may not write and read is shown in an article in the same issue which contained Mr. Pollard's letter—“The Censorship in Ireland,” by A. E. And A. E. answers Mr. Pollard's questions when he says: “It would be pleasant to think of these young warriors of heaven if they knew the first thing about the soul of man, that its virtue is to be free, to choose between the light and the dark, and that there is no virtue where there is no free choice.”

“It is a dangerous attempt in any Government,” said Tom Paine, “to say to a nation *Thou shalt not read*. Thought, by some means or other, is got abroad in the world, and cannot be restrained, though reading may”—a saying which deserves to be remembered by those who want to regulate our reading through Scotland Yard and the Police Courts.—Yours, &c.,

LEONARD WOOLF.

SIR,—Your correspondent, F. E. Pollard, has bravely voiced an opinion which has long needed a protagonist. No society can tolerate that which is anti-social, even in art, and the only imaginable state of society in which the reckless indulgence of our carnal passions would not be anti-social is anarchy. Few of us are so strong-minded that we can read literature of the type so aptly described by Mr. Pollard without to some extent, although perhaps unconsciously, assimilating its values. Are we not all pampering our sensuality under the cover of literary taste? The life of a young man is already difficult enough, especially if he be sensitive and passionate, and now literature joins with cinema and stage to debase those emotions and desires which, treated with an honesty which their own beauty

merits, are the source of the intensest joy we ever experience. Anyone who has ever loved a woman purely will be grateful to your correspondent for reminding the critics that we have not all abandoned those standards which are essential to our moral and physical welfare.—Yours, &c.,

P. J. E.

60, Acre Lane, S.W.2.
December 29th, 1928.

AMERICA AND EUROPE

SIR,—Mr. Guedalla's "Jazz and J. A. S." in your last issue, is a curious mixture—for an American. That America, "the gigantic daughter of the West, was always apt to pass long hours before the mirror," admits of little doubt—though, I have known aged spinsters on this side far more eager for admiration. I rather think that the prevailing stream of European books on America (certainly no literary flow) is not due so much to the Western daughter's vanity, as it is to the average European's freedom from doubt as to his own powers of observation (crowded into some few months) and the eager, devouring European reader, who will pay the price for the finished product.

I can only hope that more like Messrs. Guedalla and Spender will call attention to what I might term the barbarisms of the economic Paradise in the United States. Much might be said about the defects of the American business machine. European observers have shown an astonishing defect in never seeing more than the skyscraper, the gigantic factory, the large and elegant apartment buildings, &c. Indeed, their powers of observation rarely extend to a cursory examination of the interior. It would be more than worth while for Europe to determine the comparative "state of nature" in which the American lives in his business world.

I suspect, after some eighteen months in England (somewhat longer than most European "observers" spend in America) that the Englishman is too prone to make British standards and tastes his infallible guides and tests. Perhaps we may yet discover some penetrating English soul who will attempt some study of American types and who will not judge all corners of America by his own corner of London. Perhaps he will not, when in Omaha, require his Yorkshire Pudding, Roast Beef, or Cup of Tea exactly as he gets it in Piccadilly.

Our ideal observer may even begin to see some real progress and value in the libraries, universities, laboratories, museums, galleries, &c., apart from the statistics and costs and size. Perhaps he will more fully understand their cultural problems and their sincere efforts, in most fields of endeavour, to advance mankind. In short, Mr. St. John Ervine's classic verdict—"I happen to be a European, and therefore a civilized person," is the target in question. Finally, our ideal critic may find the extreme fallacy in passing judgments on a country generally and confine himself to the comparison of classes and types and conditions. He may see a distinct resemblance between types in each country—certainly between admirals of both navies.—Yours, &c.,

ALBERT H. ROBBINS.

Harewood, Rickmansworth, Herts.
December 28th, 1928.

THE NARDINI VERDICT

SIR,—In the letter that Mr. Villari has sent you (THE NATION, December 15th) on the Nardini verdict, I see that once more he has been unable to resist the temptation of using what Mark Twain called "slight inaccuracies." May I be allowed to tell a few facts?

Mr. Villari says that Di Modugno was arrested in 1921 before the Fascists came to power; true, but Mr. Villari should have added that, though he was acquitted, the police began to persecute him again in February, 1923, when the Fascists were in power: he lost his job for that; he was arrested twice more and compelled to stay in his native town where he could find no work; he had to escape to France at the beginning of 1927 to save himself from internment. This information was given by the POPOLO D'ITALIA (Mussolini's own paper) of September 16th, 1927.

Di Modugno wanted desperately to have his wife and

child with him, and had been driven half-mad by the mocking dilly-dallying attitude of the Fascist authorities in Italy; he was asked to "call again" in a few weeks every time he went to the Consulate: this explains why he called only three times in several months, and not every single day, as Mr. Villari would have wanted him to do; when he realized that his wife and baby were being kept in Italy as hostages for his behaviour, he lost his head.

Mr. Villari quotes from the LIBERTÉ that eighty-two other murders or attempted murders have been committed in France against Fascists; in his capacity of propaganda agent of Fascism, Mr. Villari surely has first-hand information about these crimes. Will he kindly give names, dates, &c., for even as much as one-tenth of these crimes? Or is it too much to ask for one-tenth of truth?

To understand the light sentence given to Di Modugno, it must be borne in mind that on the Continent political crimes are differently regarded from those crimes in England. French juries acquitted the murderer of Jaurès, the murderer of Petliura, and Germaine Berthon who killed a sub-editor of the ACTION FRANÇAISE. A Swiss jury acquitted the murderer of the Bolshevik Vorovski. The fact that Di Modugno was sentenced to two years' imprisonment shows that the Parisian jurymen took into account the fact that Count Nardini was a subordinate official, not responsible for his Government's actions. They were doubtless also moved by the knowledge that after the murder the wife and baby of Di Modugno had been interned on the island of Ponza as a reprisal.

Two days after the Di Modugno trial a man, tried in Udine, Italy, for shooting dead his unfaithful wife, was not only acquitted of murder, but even of unlawful carrying of firearms!

In Italy to-day not a leaf stirs except with the will of the Government. Therefore the outburst against France was nothing else than a Fascist political manoeuvre.—Yours, &c.,

A. F. MAGRI.

12, Calthorpe Street, W.C.1.
December 21st, 1928.

MUSSOLINI'S APOLOGY

SIR,—Your review of "My Autobiography" concludes, "His character is summed up in Lord Curzon's phrase, 'This absurd man.'" I would like to suggest that your reviewer should spend his next holiday in Italy: quite obviously he has never set foot in the country since Mussolini took over the government. I would further suggest that he pay a visit to the Piave valley, and afterwards inspect our own Rhondda valley, and observe the difference between activity and stagnation. He may then agree that the political genius responsible for the activity in the Piave valley would hardly content himself with an appeal for money and clothing for unemployed miners. In this connection it is not uninteresting to note that after the Etna disaster Mussolini prohibited the launching of a charitable fund for the distressed Sicilians, because in his estimation the calamity was an affair of State. I am, of course, aware that "this absurd man," has extinguished the liberty of the Press, but I am quite unable to perceive that the large circulation papers in this country, under the control of multi-millionaire industrial magnates, are in any better position—except to make mischief.—Yours, &c.,

JOHN NORTH.

Four Winds, Beaconsfield, Bucks.
December 30th, 1928.

CRIME TO ORDER

SIR,—To what an extent it is possible to manufacture crime on a great scale and also to dissipate it purely by administrative order is not perhaps fully realized. For several years the Bench of which I am a humble member has mulcted motorists of about £5,000 per annum. In many cases the offenders were poor men upon whom the fine imposed meant the loss of a week's wages. In our righteous indignation we sometimes fined the unemployed, and in many cases distraint warrants were issued for non-payment. Thus nobly did we vindicate the majesty of the law. Then suddenly did a ukase issue from some high police authority,

and, Hey Presto! prosecutions entirely ceased. Was the law altered? No. Was the speed limit abolished? No. The variegated posts still warn the callous speed merchants, but whereas under the previous official practice an unlucky 1 per cent. of the offenders were hauled into Court and each disposed of in about two minutes, now 100 per cent. escape. Is anyone a penny the worse? No. Is anyone better off? Yes. The miserable offender and the still more miserable

J. P.

THE NAVY LEAGUE'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

SIR,—“If, therefore, the League of Nations could be induced to postpone its efforts for disarmament to a more propitious future the cause of world harmony would be better served.”

This is the Navy League's New Year message to the world, written above the name of Lord Sydenham of Combe, its deputy president.

“How sweet the word of Sydenham sounds in a believer's ear!”—if I may be pardoned for this wicked parody! Here we are ringing our bells (and some of us wringing our hands) to ring out an old year of failure over vital issues, and ringing in the New Year with a resolution not to fail in the future by the simplest of all methods—of not trying to do anything at all. Simplicity has always been a private preserve of the naval mind; for naïveté this gentle message takes some beating. “To the Navy League it seems clear that while we should welcome any agreement as regards cruiser strength which leaves us free to build what our special conditions demand, it will be wisest for the present to enter upon no further conferences liable to be used to promote misunderstandings.” And the message further appeals to us to realize that “One consistent law runs through our whole national history . . . superiority on the sea is the gauge of our island's fortunes.”

May it not be suggested that “the old order changeth,” and that even the basis of a nation's greatness may change; and further that this is the critical moment in the world's history when we should change it?

Some day, some happy day, we hope to be led by men, not experts, who will realize that the way of peace depends on men of goodwill, lighted by a vision that sees beyond the fearful ways of Navy Leagues to the more courageous walks of peace. In the meantime—preserve us from this naïve simplicity that sometimes smacks of intellectual obliquity.—Yours, &c.,

E. B. CASTLE.

Leighton Park School, Reading.
December 31st, 1928.

A SPECIAL MATINÉE

SIR,—I should be most grateful if you would allow me space to bring to the notice of your readers a very special effort which is being made to add to the Fund for the relief of the most urgent and pressing destitution in the stricken mining areas.

Mr. H. M. Harwood and Mr. Leon M. Lion of the Ambassadors Theatre have offered to the Lord Mayor's Fund for the Relief of Distress in the Coalfields, the entire proceeds of a special matinée of “Many Waters,” to be held at the Ambassadors Theatre, on Saturday, January 12th, all services being given free.

May I beg your readers to take tickets for this matinée in order that as much as possible may be realized from this effort to swell the Fund for the relief of the worst and most pitiable misery among the starving miners and their families.

Prices: Stalls, 12s.; Dress Circle, 12s. and 8s. 6d.; Upper Circle and Pit Stalls, 5s. 9d.; Pit, 4s. 3d., or any higher sums which it is desired to give.

The Government grant will make every £1 given £2.

Tickets may be obtained either from the Ambassadors Theatre, West Street, W.C.2, or from myself.—Yours, &c.,

L. L'ESTRANGE MALONE.

6, Phené Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

December 31st, 1928.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF “PAMELA” AND “CLARISSA”*

IN 1741 there appeared anonymously in London an octavo volume bearing the following lengthy and (to us) forbidding title, which must however be given, for it is the birthplace of world-famous novels:—

LETTERS
written To and For
PARTICULAR FRIENDS
on the most
IMPORTANT OCCASIONS
Directing not only the Requisite
STYLE AND FORMS
to be Observed in Writing
FAMILIAR LETTERS;
But how to
THINK and ACT, JUSTLY and PRUDENTLY,
IN THE
COMMON CONCERNS
OF
HUMAN LIFE
CONTAINING
One hundred and seventy-three Letters
none of which were ever before Published.

This original volume (now reprinted for the first time since the century before last) owes its origin (as in truth do many better books) to the suggestive minds of two once well-known Printers (Mr. Charles Rivington and Mr. John Osborn), who, laudably anxious to keep their presses at work, entreated Richardson (in his own words) “to write for them a little volume of letters in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves. ‘Will it be any harm,’ said I, ‘in a piece you want to be written so low, if we should instruct them how they should think and act in common cases as well as indite?’ They were the more urgent with me to begin this little volume for this hint.”

It is hard to read these simple words of an honest tradesman without experiencing the same emotions that rise within us when we stand by the side of the origin of great rivers, such as the Mersey or the Clyde, which we know are destined to carry to the great ocean, and to the ports of the world, the heavily freighted ships of our Mercantile Marine. On this moving though simple text Mr. Downs has constructed a fascinating Introduction of fifteen pages, full of learning and reading, and all the more delightful because hardly to be looked for in a volume containing letters addressed to an imaginary young man “on too soon keeping a horse,” or from a young woman “recommending a wet-nurse”! But when we remember we are visiting the birthplace of “Pamela” and “Clarissa,” nothing need surprise us. Mr. Downs traces back to Egypt and the Pharaohs the useful habit of collecting precedents to be employed on “Important Occasions.”

Experience, both as an articulated clerk to a solicitor and, in later life, as a draftsman of clauses in Bills to be submitted to a partisan Parliament, has taught us that there is usually somewhere in existence a draft for almost everything. You seldom are required to start anything quite fresh. Whether there were previous drafts for the Ten Commandments we dare not say—there certainly were for the XXXIX. Articles. Cassiodorus (so Mr. Downs tells us), circa 537 A.D., collected seventy-two drafts of public documents; and in the “Bibliothèque Nationale” in Paris is deposited a long correspondence, previous to and during

* “Familiar Letters on Important Occasions.” By Samuel Richardson. With an Introduction by Brian W. Downs, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. (Routledge, 10s. 6d.)
“Richardson.” By Brian W. Downs. (Routledge, 6s.)

litigation between an Archdeacon of Chartres and his Bishop, to serve as models for future ecclesiastical strife.

When printing came along, the demand for precedents, even in familiar letters, was stimulated, and in Venice in 1487 there appeared a "Formularia de epistole vulgare," said on the title-page to have been compiled by Bartolommea Minatore, though, says Mr. Downs, the British Museum thinks fit to assign it to C. Landino. We may be sure good Mr. Richardson derived no assistance from these early predecessors in the same line of business.

Englishmen have ever loved precedents, even in their love letters, and so, Mr. Downs tells us, our earliest collector of Forms for Letters appeared in 1568, in the person of William Fulwood in his "Enemie of Idleness, teaching the manner and stile, how to endite, compose, and write all sorts of Epistles and Letters." The book was in four sections, and the last is made up of love letters, not only in prose, but in verse. This was before the date of actions for breach of promise of marriage.

In our Editor's opinion Nicolas Breton is the first ancestor in the direct line of Richardson, for his "Post with a packet of mad letters," which appeared about 1600, had a great run that continued down to the date of Richardson's birth, and may therefore have become known to him. Breton's compilation contained 153 letters.

Mr. Downs pursues his subject through the eighteenth century, but we can follow him no further; only remarking that he calls our attention to the fact that the habit of telling a fictitious story by means of inventing letters and attributing them to the characters was, if not actually started in France, greatly favoured there, lending itself as it did to erotic writing. "The finest purely French token of this mintage, Marivaux's 'Marianne' (1731-41), had just been completed when Richardson finished his commission for the 'Familiar Letters'" (see Introduction, page xxi.).

Tearing ourselves away from the Introduction, we approach the "Familiar Letters" themselves. We say at once that we cannot honestly press them upon the turned-up noses of those non-Richardsonians who are doomed to go to their graves preferring "Tom Jones" and "Amelia" to the novels of Richardson. Yet even these stony-hearted readers may, as lovers of literature, deign to cast a glance over the pages of a Collection of Letters, which though they will certainly provoke many smiles, have a place in the genesis of genius.

Mr. Downs singles out three of the Letters (Nos. 62, 138, 139) which relate to attempts made to destroy the virtue of servant girls, and reveal in homely language the risks Innocence runs both in town and country, and also shows what a strong hold these dangers had got upon the mind and conscience of the author of "Pamela." Otherwise and for the most part these Letters deal with less tragic incidents in the common concerns of human life; as, e.g., the one addressed "To a Gentleman of Fortune who has Children, dissuading him from a Second Marriage with a Lady much older than Himself" (No. 140). An admirable letter!

This Collection does contain one Letter (No. 176) which is throughout composed in a style, coarse and strong, and abounding in vulgar expressions; a style which all Richardsonians will at once recognize with pride as being truly his, whenever he thought the occasion demanded it. This is the style that so annoyed the prim Southey, who reserved all his strong language for those who had the assurance to differ from him in the politics of his later days—and would also, we feel sure, greatly surprise our present Home Secretary, who has probably always regarded Richardson as a very ladylike author who could safely be recommended to his "little ones."

Even before the "Familiar Letters" was ready for the press, "Pamela" was begun, and "Pamela" begat "Clarissa," and "Clarissa" begat "Sir Charles Grandison," and there, to the grief of a few, and the relief of many, the propagation ceased. But now, it is made plain to us, that by devoting so much of our space to Mr. Downs's Introduction to Richardson's "Familiar Letters," we have left ourselves no room to expatiate on the merits of his book on Richardson himself. These merits are great. If the reader begins the book at the end, and reads the Index first, he will at once perceive how well the biographer is equipped for his task. Mr. Downs's knowledge of those who are often somewhat contemptuously described as "the old Novelists of the Eighteenth Century" can only be described, in the unavoidable language of Dickens as "extensive and peculiar," for not only does he know the names of the novelists, men and women alike (for this mere Index knowledge "turns no student pale"), but he knows and tells you the contents of their stories, and discriminates between them most judiciously. He thinks highly of "Betty Thoughtless," and speaks up for Tom Brown's "Lindamara," though this Tom Brown of "facetious memory" must not for one moment be confounded with the statelier figure of Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, as (so we are told) was lately done in public by a distinguished living statesman.

Nothing can well be more agreeable than the way in which many of these renovated ghosts of half-forgotten story-tellers chatter and chuckle, and flutter their skirts in Mr. Downs's pages. Will anybody, we wonder, in the twenty-first century do the same kind service for the novelists of to-day? His Salon will be a crowded one.

It must not be assumed that Richardson's latest biographer and critic is a sworn devotee. He is nothing of the kind, and can bring himself to write quite composedly of the "imbecilities" of the second part of "Pamela." He also makes some references to Sterne which, half a century ago, would have made us very angry, but to-day we are content to murmur *Tempus est jam hinc abire me*.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

BEDROOMS FOR SINGULAR GENTLEMEN

WE stopped the car outside the low, flat-faced inn which was the central feature of the village street.

An old collie, slumbering in the very middle of the road, blinked at us for a moment, and deciding that we looked thirsty and would be unlikely to disturb him again for some time, went to sleep again. We were not only thirsty but hungry, and—with some diffidence, knowing the inhospitality of country hotels at nine o'clock on a summer evening—we asked for food.

A landlord, who looked as if he had stepped not from one of Dickens's inns, but from one of his lawyer's offices, came doubtfully forward. His chief garment was a shabby grey tail-coat. His collar was of an antique make. His trousers were a baggy pair of dittoes, and his boots were elastic-sided. His face was lean and white and furrowed, and his hands thin and nervous. Yet there was nothing sinister about the man, as he peered at us inquiringly through his spectacles. He seemed as if he were reproaching himself gently for any suspicions he may have had of us.

"We have nothing, I am afraid, gentlemen," he began.

"A little cold meat," we asked, almost imploringly, "bread and cheese?"

"Ah, no," he said, his solemn face lightening with

relief. "I meant nothing prepared—in the way of soup, fish, entrée, joint, sweet, and savoury. We have so little demand. But if a porterhouse steak or some prime chops, nicely grilled, with new potatoes and peas from my own garden—?"

"D'you mean you could really do that?" we gasped, "in England," we added (but not aloud) "at nine o'clock, p.m. in this picturesque Tudor village, on this bleak, unfriendly coast. Can we suddenly dream?"

"In a quarter of an hour or so," he replied, "if you will do me the goodness to wait. Doubtless you will wish to be pushing on. I will see you are not delayed."

We had no doubt as to the best way to fill in that fifteen minutes. We ordered two pints of his beer.

The room in which we were sitting had some massive mahogany furniture set incongruously against some fine Tudor panelling. Our beer was served in old pewter and drawn from the wood.

"You know where we are?" began my companion, always ready to impart his knowledge. "This sleepy old place used to be one of the busiest ports in England. It resisted William the Conqueror. For centuries it supplied its quota of ships to the British Navy. Its Mayor has a prescriptive right to carry the King's something, I can't remember what, at every Coronation. In Napoleonic times it was one of the most notorious centres of smuggling in this country. By Jove," he added, "I bet this old place has seen a good deal of that. I shouldn't be surprised if it is full of smugglers' holes and cupboards. This very room"—and he began very impertinently to tap the old oak panelling.

"Did you knock, sir?" asked our landlord, putting his nose through the open doorway.

"No, thank you," I laughed apologetically, "my friend here was becoming enthusiastic over this beautiful oak."

"It is much admired," he said; "for myself I should prefer something homely in the way of wallpaper."

"We were saying," went on my companion, "that this must have been a great smuggling centre in its time."

"A smuggling centre, sir"—(was it Mr. Lowten, Mr. Perker's clerk, or Solomon Pell that his ridiculous figure suggested?)—"I never heard of it. But, then, the house has only been in my family for fifty years—and smuggling days, sir, those were many evil years ago—before Free Trade, sir, so I believe. Now we have many improvements, hot and cold water laid on (we are promised the electric light), should you care to wash, gentlemen, the chops are sizzling—sizzling nicely."

We said we would, and followed him up the broad oak staircase to the first floor. He left us there and promised us that the table would soon be laid.

It happened that his boasted lavatory had only room for one occupant at a time, so while my friend was washing I went for a short tour down a long corridor which ran the length of the hotel.

The rooms leading off it were all bedrooms. The doors were open, and I peeped into each. The beds were all made, the coverlets turned down, as if guests were expected. There were six or seven of them, and I noticed a peculiar thing about them. None of them showed any sign of recent occupation. There was no luggage on the floor, no toilet things on the washstands or dressing tables. Not that it occurred to me as singular at the time. An empty hotel was perhaps no unusual thing in these remote parts.

We sat down to our chops, our new potatoes, and green peas, and it was when, after a glass of port, we were suffused with an easy contentment that the brilliant idea occurred to me.

"We'll stay here," I cried. "We won't go further to-night. It will be worth missing a few miles to sleep in one of those comfortable bedrooms—to have that marvellous breakfast we shall get to-morrow, to roam round the old town to-night." I rang the bell. "Landlord," I said, when he appeared, "we've changed our minds. We are not moving. Two bedrooms, please, and two more glasses of your excellent port."

He held out his hands in a gesture of helplessness. "The port, sir, in a moment—but, alas! we have no bedrooms, no bedrooms at all."

"No bedrooms—but I've just seen . . ."

"Ah yes," he said, "we have bedrooms, but they are not to let."

"You mean, they are already let?"

"Yes, sir, already let."

"A party coming late?" said my friend.

"Quite late," said our landlord.

"Well, that's a disappointment," I said, "but our tour will bring us back this way. We'll give you more warning. We'll sleep here on the way back."

"I'm sorry, sir—if you could give me warning I could find you most comfortable lodgings—but my bedrooms are always engaged, they are never free."

There is such a thing as an open-eyed curiosity which, if not expressed in words, is so apparent that it has got to be satisfied.

"Commercial travellers, gentlemen," murmured our landlord, "this is a great centre for commercial travellers. We have our regular clientele. We keep our beds for them. I'll fetch your port wine."

"Was there ever such bunkum talked," I exclaimed. "A little one-eyed place like this with not half a dozen shops, a great centre for commercial travellers! One youth with a handbag on a bicycle is all they ever see. There's a mystery here, my boy."

"Yes," said my friend, ruefully filling his pipe, "but apparently we are not going to be allowed to stop and solve it."

Realizing that the sooner we did find a night's lodging the better, we paid our bill and started up the car. Mr. Solomon Pell stood at the door rubbing his hands regretfully.

"Very sorry, gentlemen, very sorry indeed, always comfortable lodgings in the town, should you require them."

* * *

A few miles out we were hailed by a coastguard on a bicycle struggling against a head wind.

"Could you take me aboard, sir, and the old bike? Bit of an urgent case, wouldn't trouble you otherwise?"

We hauled his bicycle into the dickey, and squeezed him into the front seat.

"Only a few miles along the coast. We're quite safe here, sir, if you wouldn't mind accelerating a bit."

I did so, and in ten minutes he signalled me to stop.

"Can't be sufficiently obliged to you, gentlemen," he said.

"I hope it's not illness," I asked as he lifted his machine down.

"No, sir," he said, his foot on the pedal. "Not illness, at least not yet—at present it's smuggling—over on the point there. They're landing a small cargo."

We lay back in our seats and I slowed down.

"Smuggling," I said, "in these days of righteousness. Funny we should have bumped into it, so soon after we had been talking about it in that old inn."

"Well, good luck to 'em," said my friend unpatriotically; "but I don't think they deserve quite such good beds."

J. B. S. B.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"THE LAST HOUR," Mr. Charles Bennett's play at the Comedy, has the advantage of being suitable either for an antidote or a supplement to the Christmas spirit. It is a penny dreadful of the first order, and may be confidently recommended to bloodthirsty schoolboys as well as to their more sophisticated parents. It is not a thriller in the sense that plausibility is subjected to excitement, but a melodrama of the Lyceum school, complete with secret service agents, Ruritanian princes, spies, spotless heroines, and a plot as thick as Sardou at his thickest or Jules Verne at his most fantastic. The acting is in just the right vein of exaggerated seriousness, especially that of the villains (gloriously overdone by Messrs. George Bealby and Franklin Dyall), and the secret service men, whose hairbreadth escapes are so nearly made convincing by Messrs. Cyril Raymond and Lawrence Anderson. But best of all is the Death Ray effect, contrived, we are informed, by Mr. Jasper Maskelyne, which consumes Mr. Dyall and Mr. S. Victor Stanley before our eyes, to say nothing of burning a few holes in the massive walls of an inn.

* * *

Plays about actresses seem for ever doomed to artistic failure and commercial success. "The Love-Lorn Lady," at Wyndham's, begins with an excellent situation, but peters out into the stereotyped slush of its kind. There are moments in the first act which lead one to expect something out of the ordinary, but they are, I fancy, entirely due to the suave acting of Mr. Francis Lister, who has too long been absent from the London stage. As soon as Miss Renee Kelly explains to her confidante Miss Fabia Drake that she has become maid to Miss Olive Sloane for the purpose of acquiring the art of fascinating the male, we know what we are in for, and can amuse ourselves by anticipating every scene. But since we are right every time this amusement is not very great.

* * *

The revue is now old enough as a form of entertainment to have acquired certain standards of its own. Mr. Cochran, Mr. Hulbert, and Mr. Charlot have produced revues which call for criticism just as serious as any manifestation of the "legitimate" drama, and a revue which falls below this level must be stamped "inferior goods." "In Other Words," Mr. George Robey's production at the Carlton, could only be praised if it were taken to be an impression of what revues were like fifteen years ago. It is a series of music-hall turns, some of which are good in themselves, linked together in the barest possible manner by meagre "production numbers" and feeble sketches. Mr. Robey's turns are exactly the same as Mr. Robey's turns have been for a quarter of a century; the others can be seen to much better advantage at any music-hall from the Palladium to the Biggleswade Hippodrome.

* * *

"The Patsy," the new comedy at the Apollo Theatre, is a hyper-saccharine mixture of "What Every Woman Knows," and "The Taming of the Shrew," dealing with the mutually exclusive but pleasing propositions that any woman can twist any man round her little finger, and that a woman respects a man for knowing how to be master in his own house. The twisting flapper was played by Miss Helen Ford, a "Broadway Star" who has been given a good deal of publicity. But the twisted Mr. Alexander Clarke gave a much more subtle performance.

* * *

The performance of "The Merchant of Venice" at the Cripplegate Institute by members of the Bernhard Baron Jewish Settlement raises many of the problems connected with "amateur" acting. Amateurs may well give a better performance than professionals, though that performance must be of a different nature. Again, it is well-nigh impossible to prevent young people living in London going to the theatre and picking up the worst mannerisms of actors. Hence amateur acting is likely to be more pleasing in the provinces than in London. The actors of the

Jewish settlement were sufficiently accomplished, but they were basing themselves too obviously on professionals. Diction is a pleasing characteristic of some amateur acting, but on this occasion many of the protagonists spoke English so imperfectly that one would have preferred the play to have been given in Yiddish. Exceptions to this rule were Mr. Polanski as Shylock and Mr. Lipschitz as Gratiano. An Old Vic atmosphere of realism also hung over the production, and a good deal of unnecessary business was introduced to prevent the play deviating into fantasy. "The Merchant of Venice" is not a very happily constructed piece, and becomes intolerable if the element, beauty, and unreality are eliminated. Next time it is to be hoped that the actors will try to forget that they have ever been to the theatre, and pay a good deal more attention to their diction.

* * *

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, January 5th.—

"The Lady With the Lamp," by Mr. Reginald Berkeley, at the Arts Theatre.

Handel's "Messiah," at the Royal Albert Hall, 2.30 (Royal Choral Society).

Orchestral Concert for Children, Central Hall, 11.

Smeterlin, Piano Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.

Sir Michael Sadler, on "Examinations," Central Hall, 5.30.

Sunday, January 6th.—

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, on "England: The Unlit Lamp," South Place, 11.

Dr. Walter Walsh, on "At the Cross-roads," Lindsey Hall, 11.

Monday, January 7th.—

Film—"Thou Shalt Not," Emil Zola's "Thérèse Raquin," at the Avenue Pavilion.

Tuesday, January 8th.—

Miss Susan Lawrence, M.P., on "Women in Industry," Caxton Hall, 8.

Mr. Robert Arch, on "The Decline and Fall of Anglicanism," Small Essex Hall, 7.30.

Sir John Cadman, on "The Mining Areas and Industrial Transference," the Wireless, 7.

Wednesday, January 9th.—

"The Chinese Bungalow," by Miss Marion Osmond and Mr. James Corbet, at the Duke of York's Theatre.

Violet de Villamil, Vocal Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy on "The New Programme of Talks," the Wireless, 9.15.

Thursday, January 10th.—

Sir Michael Sadler, on "Ruskin's Social Ideals," Morley College, 61, Westminster Bridge Road, 8.

"Maritana," at the Old Vic, 7.45.

Mr. H. Wilson Harris, on "The Week Abroad," the Wireless, 10.

Friday, January 11th.—

Gerald Cooper Concert, Recital by Schnabel, Æolian Hall, 8.30.

OMICRON.

EPITAPH UPON A DULL WOMAN

(After the Chinese.)

THIS lady when she lived
Lived in a cool pond
In a quiet garden.
This lady was a water-lily leaf
In the cool pond and the quiet garden.
And she held in the saucer of her days
Just as much coolness as a sparrow needs
To bathe with comfort
Without danger of drowning.
Many sparrows came and bathed and then flew away,
But I, a very dusty sparrow,
Bathed twice.
So it is fitting I should write her epitaph.

LYN LLOYD IRVINE.

London Amusements.

MATINEES FOR THE WEEK.

APOLLO. Thurs. & Sat., at 2.30.

CARLTON. Weds. & Sats. at 2.30.

DUKE OF YORK'S. Sat., 2.30.

DRURY LANE. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

FORTUNE. Thurs., Sat., at 2.30.

GARRICK. Daily, at 2 o'clock.

HIPPODROME. Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.

KINGSWAY. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

"THE PATSY."

IN OTHER WORDS.

SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS.

SHOW BOAT.

JEALOUSY.

PETER PAN.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

"MRS. MOONLIGHT."

LONDON PAVILION. Tues., Thur., 2.30.

LYRIC, Hammersmith. Wed., Sat., 2.30.

PRINCES. Wed., Sat., 2.30.

ROYALTY. Thurs., Sat., 2.30.

SCALA. Daily, at 2.15.

SHAFTESBURY. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

WYNDHAM'S. Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

"LUCKY GIRL."

A HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

FUNNY FACE.

BIRD IN HAND.

CINDERELLA.

THE LAD.

"THE LOVE-LORN LADY."

THEATRES.

ALDWYCH. (Gerrard 2304.)

EVENINGS, 8.15.

MATINEES, WED. & FRI., 2.30.

"PLUNDER." A New Farce by Ben Travers.

TOM WALLS and RALPH LYNN.

APOLLO. (Gerr. 6970.) EVENINGS, 8.30. MATS., THURS. & SAT., 2.30.

HELEN FORD in "THE PATSY."

A Comedy in 3 Acts, by Barry Connors.

CARLTON, Haymarket. (Reg. 221.)

"IN OTHER WORDS."

EVENINGS, at 8.30. MATS. WEDS. & SATS., at 2.30.

GEORGE ROBEY and MARIE BLANCHE.

DRURY LANE. (Temple Bar 7171.) 8.15 precisely. Wed., Sat., 2.30.

"SHOW BOAT" A New Musical Play.

DUKE OF YORK'S.

"SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS."

MATHESON LANG.

ISOBEL ELSOM.

EVENINGS, at 8.30.

MATINEE, SAT., at 2.30 (Last Week).

FORTUNE (Temple Bar 7373.)

MARY NEWCOMB in

JEALOUSY. By Eugene Walters

With Crane Wilbur.

EVENINGS, at 8.40.

Matinees, Thurs. & Sat., at 2.30.

GARRICK. (Gerr. 9513.)

DAILY, at 2 and 8

"PETER PAN." By J. M. Barrie

MARIE LOHR, JEAN FORBES-ROBERTSON, MALCOLM KEEN.

HIPPODROME, London. Evenings, at 8.15.

Gerrard 9560.

MATS., WEDS., THURS. & SATS., at 2.30.

"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL."

JACK BUCHANAN.

ELSIE RANDOLPH.

HOLBORN EMPIRE.

"WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS."

MATINEES ONLY. DAILY, 2.15. ITALIA CONTI Prod.

Box Office and Libraries open. Popular Prices, 7/6, 5/-. etc. (Holb. 5367.)

KINGSWAY. (Holborn 4032.) EVENINGS, 8.40. WED. & SAT., 2.30

"MRS. MOONLIGHT."

A New Play by Benn. W. Levy.

LONDON PAVILION. (Gerr. 0704.) EVGS., 8.30. Tues., Thurs., 2.30.

"LUCKY GIRL." A New Musical Farce.

Anita Elson, Clifford Mollison, Greta Fayne, Spencer Trevor.
and GENE GERRARD.

THEATRES.

LYRIC Hammersmith.

"A HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

EVENINGS, at 8.30.

Mats., Wed. & Sat., at 2.30.

Horace Hodges, Angela Baddeley, Nigel Playfair, Mabel Terry Lewis.

PRINCES. (Ger. 3400.)

FUNNY FACE.

FRED ASTAIRE, ADELE ASTAIRE, and LESLIE HENSON.

Evenings, at 8.15.

Matinees, Wed. & Sat., at 2.30.

ROYALTY. (Ger. 2690.) EVENINGS, 8.30. MATS., THURS. & SAT., 2.30.

BARRY JACKSON presents

"BIRD IN HAND."

A Comedy by JOHN DRINKWATER.

ST. MARTIN'S. (Gerr. 1243.) At 8.15. MATS., MON., TUES., FRI., 2.40.

"77 PARK LANE." By Walter Hackett.

HUGH WAKEFIELD and MARION LORNE.

SAVOY. Evgs. 8.30. Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, 2.30. LAST WEEKS.

"YOUNG WOODLEY."

FRANK LAWTON.

KATHLEEN O'REGAN.

SCALA. (1 min. Goodge St. Stn.)

Twice Daily, 2.15 & 7.45

"CINDERELLA."

With WILL EVANS, OUIDA MacDERMOT, BROS. EGBERT, ETC.

All Seats bookable. Popular Prices.

Museum 6010.

SHAFTESBURY. (Ger. 6666.)

BILLY MERSON in

"THE LAD." By EDGAR WALLACE.

NIGHTLY, at 8.30. MATINEES, WED. & SAT., at 2.30.

WYNDHAM'S NIGHTLY, at 8.30. MATS., WED. & SAT., at 2.30.

"THE LOVE-LORN LADY."

RENEE KELLY, OLIVE SLOANE, FRANCIS LISTER.

CINEMAS.

EMPIRE, Leicester Square. Continuous, Noon—11 p.m. Sane., 6.0—11 p.m.

"OUR DANCING DAUGHTERS."

Featuring JOAN CRAWFORD.

THE EMPIRE'S FIRST SOUND-FEATURE.

REGAL. Marble Arch.

Paddington 9911.

Continuous, 2-11 p.m. Doors open 1.30.

Sundays, 6-11 p.m. Doors open 5.30. See and hear

AL JOLSON in "THE SINGING FOOL."

STOLL PICTURE THEATRE. Kingsway.

(Holborn 3703.)

DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, New Programme, 6 to 10.30.)

January 7th, 8th & 9th. MATHESON LANG in "THE KING'S HIGHWAY";

RICHARD DIX in "EASY COME, EASY GO"; M. M. Mitchell, Mezzo-

Soprano.

January 10th, 11th & 12th. LILI DAMITA in "THE DANCER OF BARCE-

LONA"; Walter Forde in "WAIT AND SEE"; Miguel Galvan, Mexican

Troubadour.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

BUTTERFLIES

MESSRS. DUCKWORTH have just published the Collected Works of Ronald Firbank in five volumes, price five guineas the set. The books are elegantly printed and bound, and the edition is graced by an introduction, critically appreciative, by Mr. Arthur Waley, and a memoir, biographically appreciative, by Mr. Osbert Sitwell. A writer, especially if he have so small a public as had Firbank, is not crowned *post-mortem* with a complete Edition unless there are followers, and a publisher with considerable belief in his merits. My knowledge of Firbank's works has hitherto been small and suspicious, but, when I found two such intelligent people as Mr. Waley and Mr. Sitwell going bail for his immortality, I felt that I must increase my knowledge in the hope of lessening the suspicions. The result has been so far satisfactory in that I have read a considerable portion of these five volumes, have increased my knowledge, and turned suspicion into certainty. Firbank was a writer of considerable talent, some originality, and a lively imagination, but he was essentially second-rate.

* * *

It requires some critical courage for a mere journalist to disagree on a matter of taste with two writers of the calibre of Mr. Waley and Mr. Sitwell, and Mr. Waley makes it all the more difficult for him to do so by explaining that journalists and reviewers and "professional critics" have never appreciated Firbank because "in their natural fear of being hoaxed" they "have invented what they consider to be an infallible method of self-protection; they will admit no one who does not carry the passport of solemnity, counter-signed by two octogenarians." This puts anyone who thinks Firbank silly and second-rate on the defensive. And this is the defence. Both Mr. Waley and Mr. Sitwell compare Firbank to a butterfly. He is a butterfly writer. Mr. Waley, indeed, himself has to admit that he is often a silly butterfly. But the point is that there is nothing solemn or solid in him; his writings are fantasias, light flittings of the imagination, the fluttering of brightly coloured wings the down of which is wit and humour and verbal beauty. Now it is certain that people have written works which were on the surface light and fantastic nonsense of this kind, and were yet first-class, but I do not think it true that even reviewers have persistently refused to recognize merit in them. The story of the lady who changed into a fox is a fantastic book, but has never been condemned as silly. "The Dreadful Dragon of Hay Hill," by Mr. Max Beerbohm (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.), which has just been published, is just as light, fantastic, and nonsensical as Firbank's "Prancing Nigger" or "The Flower Beneath the Foot," but, like "Zuleika Dobson," it has all over it the hall-mark of 22 carat.

* * *

There are two main reasons, I think, why the fluttering of "Max's" wings produces first-class writing and those of Firbank's second-rate. The first is simply that the one can write and the other cannot. Mr. Max Beerbohm is a writer of beautiful prose. It is not ostentatiously "well written," but you have only to open a page of "The Dreadful Dragon" at random, and you will find a paragraph in which the sound of words and the rhythm of sentences are beautifully modulated to the sense or the nonsense. Firbank's prose, on the contrary, is ostentatiously well written. But it is terribly monotonous, always

doing the same thing, and the monotony—so it seems to me—is the monotony of the fake. It is the prose of the decadent poseur of the nineties and the Yellow Book, and it always says slightly different things in rhythms which have the automatic tick of a well-made clock. Examine the rhythms of the following sentences which I have been able to pick out instantly by idly turning over the pages of two of his stories:—

"In the Salle de Prince or Cabinet d'Antoine, above the Café Cleopatra, Madame Wetme, the wife of the proprietor, sat perusing the Court gazettes."

"In the Archduchess's bedchamber, watching the antics of priests and doctors, he sat there unmoved."

"In a rocking-chair, before the threshold of a palm-thatched cabin, a matron with broad, bland features and a big, untidy figure surveyed the scene with a nonchalant eye."

The "tick, tock; tick, tock" of these sentences gives the show away. The watch is guaranteed to go for two years; it keeps perfect time; and if anything does go wrong, a spare part can be put in while you wait.

* * *

The other cause of Firbank's second-rateness is to be found in his matter. It is, of course, not true, as Mr. Waley points out, that a book cannot be great or even good unless it is solemn. But, on the other hand, no one except a stupendous genius could make a work of art out of sheer nonsense—indeed, I doubt very much whether Mr. Waley could point to a single case in which the feat has been performed. The great writers who take us on butterfly wings into a fantastical and nonsensical world never allow us to forget altogether the solid and sordid seriousness of the real world. They are not necessarily satirists, but their nonsense is always illuminated by flickers of sense. This is true of Rabelais and Shakespeare, Sterne, Gogol, Peacock. One can hardly believe that even "Alice in Wonderland" would be as good as it is if it were not for this flickering of seriousness through the nonsense. It is certainly the case with "Max." "The Dreadful Dragon" is as light and fantastic as anything of Firbank's, and yet it is, from one point of view, a moral tale—but it is not a solemn moral tale. The trouble, however, with Firbank is not that he is not serious; he is serious, but his seriousness is much more silly than his nonsense. In fact, he is silly not when he is fantastic, but when in his fantasy he refers to the real world. In "Prancing Nigger," "The Flower Beneath the Foot," and "Caprice"—which are probably his best works—there are amusing isolated scenes, and people sometimes say witty or amusing things, but when he is serious, his seriousness is the tiresome seriousness of the *poseur*. The world of fact which flickers through or behind his fantasias is the world of the greenery-yallery nineties, of the Green Carnation, and the Yellow Book. The Yellow Book mind was not peculiar to the nineties; it has existed in almost every age—I think it is described by Juvenal. In the very young it is sometimes a sign of health, but in the mature writer it is always a symptom of second-rateness. Firbank's position as a writer has been fixed for him by his possession of the Yellow Book mind. He poses in his books, just as he posed when he went to a magnificent dinner and would eat only one green pea. That kind of pose cannot produce a masterpiece.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

INDIA IN TRANSITION

India in the Crucible. By C. S. RANGA IYER. (Selwyn & Blount. 7s. 6d.)

India: the New Phase. By SIR STANLEY REED and P. R. CADELL, C.S.I., C.I.E. The Westminster Library. (Philip Allan. 3s. 6d.)

An Indian Commentary. By G. T. GARRATT. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

It must be long since three books on India, all of such value, appeared together. Mr. Ranga Iyer's is far better than his "Father India," that pathetic rebuttal of "Mother India." It requires patience to read, it includes such a mass of miscellaneous detail. But it is illuminating in its revelation of the hopes and ambitions cherished by Moderates and the bitterness of disappointment which threw nearly all of them into the ranks of the opponents of the Simon Commission. Briefly, the Indian groups that had co-operated to work the Reforms felt that the non-inclusion of a single Indian on the Commission which was to settle their country's constitution—for the Commission's advice would decide the action of the British Parliament—was a slight not only galling in its revelation of contempt, but destroying their self-respect in face of mocking extremists. "That is what you get in return for sycophancy!" I suppose very few Englishmen, of any party, would refuse to admit now that the chances of the Simon Commission were marred by tactlessness at the outset, and by insolence later. Its leader has done what he could to repair the harm; "he is not Sir John Simon, he is Sir John Siren," announced a waggish Swarajist when walking out from an abortive conference. The whole Moderate case is in Mr. Iyer's book. It raises a doubt, however, whether there can be many Moderates as very, very moderate as he is; I am afraid his group is so small that he cannot be taken as representative of any considerable section of Indian political opinion.

The Indian Civil Service, in the writings and utterances of its retired members, has not (of late) impressed the home public either with its modesty or its reasonableness. An association claiming to represent I.C.S. opinion has sent Sir John Simon a document singularly like the kind of warning Kenya after-dinner speakers hold over a Governor suspected of unwillingness to toe the line. It is good to be reminded that there is another section, not so noisy, but with at least as much to say. Mr. P. R. Cadell, C.S.I., joins with a well-known publicist, Sir Stanley Reed, to present a fair and concise statement of India's needs, difficulties, and prospects. Both being responsible men, they cannot do more than hint that there have been real grievances underlying such remembered events as the Punjab troubles. My own opinion is that nothing short of much franker speaking will serve, that caution lest we offend the public we wish to lull into attention and then conversion will probably send that public away as obtuse as it came, while the Indian public that is overbearing will be disgusted. There are a few slips. Page 2—can we state so categorically that "Æsop's Fables" and the "Arabian Nights" drew their stories from India? "Even the Carpenter would have wept to see such quantities of sand," as there are in Bikanir—do the poet's words justify this assumption that the sight of sand ordinarily distressed only the Walrus? The industrialization of upcountry Bengal has gone much further than is stated on page 112. But the book is excellent, and gives as good a résumé as would be possible in the space.

Mr. Garratt, also ex-I.C.S. (and with experience of Indian Army service in Mesopotamia), writes more fully. I have never read so packed a book on the Indian situation; it is all muscle and no padding. It must represent the patient study of years. Mr. Lionel Curtis once lamented to me the difficulty of persuading men who have served in India that their opinions, however backed by ability and experience, are, after all, just "opinions." Remembering this, all I dare say is that to me the book seems masterly—such a book

as I should like to have written, if I had the knowledge. There is frank speaking in it; but that does not mean the airing of opinions that have cost nothing. Mr. Garratt, who does not whitewash anything or anybody, puts his judgments quietly and modestly, taking no sides, aware equally of the absurdity of the Khilafat agitation and of the British legend of themselves in India. Nothing of first-rate, or even second-rate, importance is omitted from this survey; he remembers alike the cultivators and the ruling princes, both of them rocks on which any readjustment may split. The public recently bought many thousands of a rowdy book that said nothing whatever; if there is an equally large public that prefers its books concrete and its arguments sparsely and dispassionately chiselled, then "An Indian Commentary" should repeat the success of "The Lost Dominion." Particularly valuable is Mr. Garratt's account of events and movements that brought us to the present position.

EDWARD THOMPSON.

PALMERSTON AND GLADSTONE

Palmerston and Gladstone: Being the Correspondence of Lord Palmerston with Mr. Gladstone, 1851-1865. Edited with an Introduction and Commentary by PHILIP GUEDALLA. (Gollancz, 16s.)

To those accustomed to look to Mr. Guedalla for entertainment, the Life of Palmerston that he published not long ago was a revelation. It was light, amusing, and brilliant; sometimes the desire to amuse at all costs became a little fatiguing, though as a rule it was kept under control. But in addition to these qualities it showed that Mr. Guedalla, when he liked, could work seriously at historical composition, and many people who had taken up his book expecting merely to beguile a tedious hour, put it down feeling that they understood Palmerston and his times a good deal better, and that they owed this illumination to Mr. Guedalla's solid industry as well as to his gift for vivid description. Now that other people are taking him seriously as a historian he has every encouragement to take himself seriously, and this volume is the first of a series he proposes to give to the world. He tells us that the series will include the letters of Melbourne to Palmerston, and the letters of Palmerston to Clarendon, "in which, Prime Minister himself, he directed military operations and foreign policy through the Crimean War, the Congress of Paris, and the years that followed." He is therefore justified in hoping that he is about to make a "contribution to national and international history as well as to the biography of a great figure and his contemporaries."

Mr. Guedalla introduces his letters with a short essay on biography and a commentary on the contents of the letters and the characters and relations of the writers. Gladstone and Palmerston made a curious combination, only less curious than the combination of Palmerston and Shaftesbury, and Mr. Guedalla's study of their personalities is picturesque and illuminating. Palmerston's particular kind of humour, which is so attractive, comes out in several of his letters. Thus he tells Gladstone that several people would prefer that he had been able to remain Member for Oxford after Gladstone's speech describing himself as "unmuzzled," and, when he is agreeing to the proposal to ask Parliament for a pension for Cobden, he writes, "Gladstone mentioned to me more than once a year ago that the wish of Cobden's friends that a Parliamentary pension might be obtained for him, as he was very poor, having sadly mismanaged his own affairs, just as he would if he could the affairs of the nation." He enjoys rubbing it in when Gladstone is associated with Bright and Cobden in pamphlets. Palmerston's power of adapting himself, under Shaftesbury's guidance, to new conditions comes out in his support of a shorter working day, and his desire to reform the beer-house system set up by Wellington just before the Reform Bill. Both he and Gladstone thought seriously of taking over the railways, and Gladstone, as Mr. Guedalla points out, outlined a scheme for

their administration on the lines suggested by Liberals for the coal mines. The letters on this subject are remarkably interesting, particularly the letter written by Gladstone in December, 1864, describing a plan by which the railways should be purchased by the State, worked by commercial companies as lessees from the State in conveniently divided groups, and "superintended so far as the State is concerned by a Board or Department having a qualified independence of the Executive Government." Palmerston was scared by the cost, and Gladstone, in replying to this objection, remarked: "The question of purchasing the mass of railway property is a vast and staggering one; and there is much between looking at it and adopting it."

The correspondence on the Civil War shows that Palmerston was more cautious than Gladstone. It contains also an extremely interesting passage in a memorandum by Gladstone of October 1st, 1862, giving his views on intervention. "The nineteenth century has many boasts, some fictitious and some real. Among the most real and also among the noblest of its distinctions, as I think, has been the gradual and sensible growth of what may be rudely called an international opinion, which carries in the main the authority of the mass of nations, and, wherever it is brought to bear, powerfully influences the conduct of each nation in particular; acting in a manner more or less analogous to that in which public opinion, as we commonly term it, acts upon the institutions and policy of a well-ordered country. Moral force operated considerably in the Crimean War; moral force destroyed the Treaty of Zurich; and we have, I think, every reason to believe that America would feel the influence and weight of a general opinion on the part of civilized Europe that this horrible war ought to cease." This theme was afterwards to be developed in the Midlothian campaign. Palmerston's power of adapting himself to new conditions, and to what Mr. Guedalla well calls an unfamiliar landscape, fell short of Reform. Why? Perhaps because of his fear of taxation of the landed class; a subject on which he spoke strongly to his Chancellor of the Exchequer. More probably because the electorate of 1832-1867 had been enthusiastic for his John Bull policy, and he doubted whether a different electorate would prove equally amenable. Had he shared Disraeli's view that, if politicians of any party know what they want and have skill in impressing themselves, they will get it however the electorate is composed, history would have taken a different course.

THE LAST INFIRMITY

Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues. By MAY WALLAS. (Cambridge University Press. 12s. 6d.)

THIS excellent book has hardly got a joke in it. In a tiresomely brilliant age readers should be grateful to Miss Wallas for trying to tell intelligently, clearly, and soberly the story of Vauvenargues' truncated existence and to estimate his intellectual work. The story is, indeed, worth telling simply. Vauvenargues had a passion for fame, glory, what you will. He tried to achieve it as a man of action and failed, largely through ill-health. He then took (much against the grain) to literature, produced some rather confused, though delightful volumes of epigrams (for that is all his books are), and died at the age of thirty-two, poverty stricken and almost blind, his legs useless with frostbite, his face disfigured by smallpox. The world gambolled merrily on through the intellectual pleasure grounds of the eighteenth century, and Vauvenargues appeared completely forgotten. He pushed failure to epic lengths, and has gained his heart's desire by his enormous lack of achievement.

In her book, Miss Wallas quotes so aptly and so abundantly from Vauvenargues that by the time they have finished the readers will have absorbed nearly everything that is most striking in his books; and if they may sometimes think that Miss Wallas has a little overestimated the positive worth of Vauvenargues' thought, they will gladly admit never to have become bored in the process of reading.

Vauvenargues was born in Aix in 1715. He was the eldest son of a high-minded, impoverished, stingy, tyrannical, and rather stupid provincial nobleman. He had

several young brothers and sisters, who never meant much to him, and whose society he "disdained." He grew up solitary and excitable, with but two friends, one an intellectual equal to whose affection he did not respond, the elder Mirabeau, and a young lawyer called Saint Vincens, who in turn hardly responded to him. His education was grossly neglected. He read very little, and never learnt to write "correctly." As a boy he was, in the approved fashion, knocked off his legs by a translation of Plutarch. He also studied the writers of the age of Louis XIV., and Locke, Pope, and Milton, in translations. He then went into the Royal Regiment and spent his most formative years drifting from one garrison to another, not even experimenting with what little society he could get. "I hate cards and women," he wrote, "at least all the women I know." At intervals he went back to Aix and paid one short, profitless visit to Paris. Then he took part in the sterile war of the Austrian Succession, served with the army that occupied Prague, and finally ruined his health in the famous retreat. He resigned from the army, formed his glorious friendship with Voltaire, met Marmontel, published "La Connaissance de l'esprit humain," caught smallpox, and within two years was dead of consumption. It is particularly painful that such a friendless person should have suffered agonies from boredom. "I should like to turn the Château artillery on to the callers," he writes from Aix.

His life had unsuited him to be a "moralist" as his health had unsuited him to be a soldier. The "moralists," his predecessors, had built up their wisdom on a vast knowledge of humanity. Vauvenargues was as solitary as a man well could be, and had none of the wisdom that comes from social experience. His instinctive dislike of La Rochefoucauld is typical of his limitations. He simply never appreciated the significance of that devastating and revolutionary thinker. "Pity," remarks La Rochefoucauld in an aphorism that might have fallen from the lips of Doctor Freud, "is the intelligent anticipation of our own troubles to come." This merely exasperated Vauvenargues, who, in all his observations on La Rochefoucauld, hardly scores a point. Miss Wallas devotes a good deal of very fruitful labour to trying to find out exactly what Vauvenargues meant. The vagueness of his vocabulary is the best witness to his absence of all philosophical training. For him *sentiment* means sometimes feeling, sometimes passion, sometimes intuition. *Raison* is sometimes Jansenist stoicism, sometimes the same as *réflexion*. *Scepticism* has any number of meanings. Granted all French philosophers were vague, Vauvenargues exceeds the limit of the permissible.

Yet obviously Vauvenargues was a sublime creature. His effect on the few intelligent people he did meet, on a Mirabeau, a Voltaire, a Marmontel was terrific. Everyone agrees that the heroism with which he faced poverty, failure, disease, and death (all things he particularly hated) was supreme. He had the invalid's passion for boldness at all costs, and could make a hero out of Catiline. As one reads through the three volumes of his collected writings, which repeat again and again his love of strength, his hatred of death, checks and repressions, his belief in strong feelings and high endeavours, his fundamental *bonhomie*, one thinks less of Rousseau (whom he is said to have foreshadowed) than of Rousseau's great child Stendhal, himself also a soldier and a moralist. Julien Sorel lies somewhere buried in the soul of Vauvenargues. A French critic is of opinion that in a later day Vauvenargues would have gone with Saint Just. This I doubt, but I think he would have beaten the drums of Brumaire or blinked about, with Fabrice, on the field of Waterloo.

Miss Wallas has written far the best existing book on Vauvenargues. M. Paléologue is too short, Lord Morley too hasty. Sainte-Beuve, for politico-literary reasons (his first essay succeeds his outburst on Camille Desmoulins) grotesquely exaggerates his subject's importance. Miss Wallas however combines judgment and learning, and, if she too may be thought to overrate her hero's intellectual eminence, she errs, not as a politician but as a humane biographer.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

NEEDLEWORK

Needlework Throughout the Ages. By MARY SYMONDS and LOUISA PREECE. 103 Plates, 8 coloured. (Hodder & Stoughton. £7 7s.)

THE principles upon which books on Art are composed are very varied, and it is frequently difficult to define the motives that have inspired the writers of them. The author is fortunate whose subject is so clear in his brain that he can compose his dissertation within the limits of his scheme and restrain all tendency to cloud the issues at stake by pleasant, but often irrelevant, diversions. In the particular book under discussion the writers have taken so vast a field for their theme that it would have been difficult with the best intentions in the world to do more than scratch the surface of their subject. A volume that embraces every aspect of needlework in every time and country, that begins with pre-dynastic Egyptian basket-work and ends with wool pictures after Windham Tryon, must inevitably lay itself open to the charge of superficiality, particularly as there are many excursions into the spheres of silk- and tapestry-weaving, subjects which indubitably have bearing upon certain aspects of needlework, but which might well have been discarded in a work of this nature. The book is not superficial in any degree, but shows the inconsistency, often attractive, of a building which has been gradually built up and added to, as fancy, knowledge, or discovery dictated; such a charm needs pruning, and the knife has possibly not been sufficiently employed.

To all intents and purposes the terms "needlework" and "embroidery" as employed in this book are synonymous. It is important to define what is meant by the word "embroidery." It implies enrichment of one material by another, and embroidery, in my opinion, is a decorative and not a constructional process. Thus, petit-point, black-work, and crewel-work are embroidered and decorative, whereas tapestry, damask, and brocade are woven and constructional. It is essential that such a difference should be clearly recognized, as enthusiasm for his subject may lead the writer from his path. In the section on Coptic embroidery the authors point out that a certain twined stitch used to emphasize the outlining of portions of the design in Coptic tapestry was worked with a needle, and the implication is that the embroiderer was therefore responsible for the finest part of the execution. It is quite impossible to say what was the instrument which was employed by the executant, but whatever it may have been, the actual process took place while the fabric was still on the loom and is, therefore, constructional and part of the weaving, and not an additional enrichment. In reality this idea is part of the very understandable glorification of embroidery which pervades the book at the expense of fabric processes, but it is one which leads the authors into a few curious statements. It is rather begging the question to say that the design on the Imperial mantle at Vienna was embroidered, because embroidery was valued more than woven fabrics. The design is on such a scale that no loom of the twelfth century could have undertaken the weaving of it. Incidentally, while on the subject of early weavings, there is a very loose statement on the inscription of the famous "Elephant" stuff from Charlemagne's tomb at Aix-la-Chapelle. The translation, as quoted, is "Under Michael a chief chamberlain in the workshops of 'Zeuxippos,'" which is supplemented by the remark, "a part of the Grand Palace, where in the ninth and tenth centuries, the Court Stuffs were made." What the inscription actually says is: "Ἐπὶ Μιχαὴλ πριμὶ (κρηρίου) κοῦτ (ωνίτου) καὶ εἰδικού Πέτρον ἄρχοντ(ος) τοῦ Ζευξίππου ἰνδ. ἱβ," which means, "when Michael was chief chamberlain and keeper of the privy purse and Peter comptroller of the Zeuxippon. In the second indiction." "Τοῦ Ζευξίππου" may be and has been translated as the workshops of Zeuxippos, but the rest is pure conjecture.

The selection of illustrations calls for nothing but praise. They have been chosen with a care and discrimination which reflect a wide and inscient knowledge, and will be of the utmost value to the student; they are also admirably reproduced. Their arrangement in the book calls for discussion on the best method of distributing plates in a work which is to be used as a reference book. I cannot help feeling that

the simplest and most practical method is that the plates associated with each chapter should be grouped at the end of that chapter. If this cannot be arranged, then at least let them be distributed in the chapter to which they belong. But if they have to be scattered throughout the book, a method which divorces them from their text, but one which seems to be favoured by short-sighted publishers, then there must be adequate references. In this case the plates are distributed through the book and, though there are page-references on the plates themselves, there are none where the plates are discussed nor in the plate-index, so that the only method of finding a particular plate is to look through the book till you find its number, a difficult process as the numerals are not printed on the guard-slips. The system of annotation by double appendices is unwieldy and the index is inadequate. The value of the book lies in the numerous important technical explanations, in the quotations from inventories and documents, and in the rare pieces from private collections illustrated. There are a few unfortunate misprints, of which the most unpardonable is one of "Sassanian" for "Sicilian" on page 194.

LEIGH ASHTON.

THE NEW PALESTINE

The Mandate for Palestine. By J. STOYANOVSKY. (Longmans. 25s.)

DR. STOYANOVSKY is already favourably known to students of the Mandatory System as the author of "La Théorie Générale des Mandats Internationaux." In his latest work, which has the distinction of being included in Messrs. Longman's well-known series of "Contributions to International Law and Diplomacy," Dr. Stoyanovsky places the Palestine Mandate under the microscope and subjects it, point by point, to a close and commendably objective examination. The background is supplied by an introductory chapter, in which the history of the Palestine Mandate is briefly sketched, while a useful Appendix contains the text of the Mandate, as finally approved, and of the Orders in Council embodying the Palestine Constitution. The Appendix, curiously enough, does not include the text of the Balfour Declaration, which is frequently referred to but nowhere quoted in full. The historical introduction calls for little comment, except that while quoting at some length from the more familiar documents relating to American claims in respect of the mandated territories generally, it overlooks the important collection of State Papers on Palestine published by the United States Government in 1927.

The main body of the book consists of a minute and painstaking examination of the text of the Mandate in the form in which it was eventually approved by the League Council after the vicissitudes described in the Introduction. Dr. Stoyanovsky contends that, in view of the provision which is made in the Mandate for the establishment of the Jewish national home, "there can hardly be any question now whether Jews constitute a distinct national entity in the eyes of international law. . . . Jews as such have now become subjects of rights and duties provided for by international law." Dr. Stoyanovsky does not explain what duties, in the strict legal sense of the term, can be said to be imposed upon "Jews as such" by the Palestine Mandate. Be that as it may, he proceeds to point out, on familiar lines, that the assignment to the Jews as a people of a national home in Palestine has no political implications for individual Jews whose home is elsewhere. His rather elaborate argument on this point does not really amount to more than that nationality in the sense of membership of a given racial group must be distinguished from nationality in the sense of allegiance to a given State. As for the meaning of a "national home," as applied to the Jews in Palestine, Dr. Stoyanovsky's conclusion is that the object in view is "the creation, within the framework of the future Palestinian State, of an independent Jewish community out of such elements as will return to Palestine." This formula would have been more illuminating if the meaning of "an independent Jewish community" had been more clearly defined. The question which naturally suggests itself is

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"independent of what or of whom?" On this point Dr. Stoyanovsky has nothing very definite to say.

These are, perhaps, somewhat academic questions; but a disappointing feature of Dr. Stoyanovsky's book is that, learned and conscientious as it is, it turns out, when tested, to be of little assistance in dealing with various problems which have actually arisen in connection with the practical application of the Mandate. To take one example, the reconstitution of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, which is a probability of the immediate future, raises difficult and complicated questions as to the construction of Article 4 of the Mandate. On this point, all that Dr. Stoyanovsky has to say is that "the proposed enlargement of the Jewish Agency may necessitate the revision of Article 4 of the Mandate." Another question of practical importance is that of the meaning to be attached to the term *status quo* in connection with the Holy Places. How is the *status quo* principle to be applied with the conflicting Jewish and Moslem claims in respect of the Wailing Wall? What precisely is the *status quo* which the Mandatory is under an obligation to maintain? By what criterion, and by reference to what point of time, is it to be fixed? On these points also Dr. Stoyanovsky unfortunately offers no guidance.

These criticisms are not made in any carping spirit. The omissions just mentioned are only noticeable because the book as a whole maintains so high a level of competence. In spite of these weaknesses, and of a few minor inaccuracies in points of detail, "The Mandate for Palestine" is, nevertheless, a work of solid merit. If it contains comparatively little that is not already known to specialists, it breaks fresh ground in so far as it is the first attempt at a systematic, comprehensive, and objective analysis of the Palestine Mandate in its legal implications. Its value is increased by the inclusion of much useful information as to the manner in which the various provisions of the Mandate have actually been applied in practice through the legislative and administrative activities of the Mandatory Government.

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Darwinism and What it Implies. By PROFESSOR SIR ARTHUR KEITH. (Watts. 1s.)

The Meaning of Life. By C. E. M. JOAD. (Watts. 1s.)

What is Eugenics? By MAJOR LEONARD DARWIN. (Watts. 1s.)

It was by the lecture reprinted in the first of these volumes that Sir Arthur Keith gave offence in certain quarters, and brought to light a number of people as ready to resent what they mistook for a blow at human dignity, as the Roman Church was in the time of Galileo. In two supplementary essays he elaborates his remarks upon the nature of the brain and discusses anti-Darwinism. "Implications of Darwinism" is a succinct and exhilarating description of human life as understood by a man of science and experience. It is not intended to be a philosophical explanation of the universe. "Medical men can find no grounds for believing that the brain is a dual organ—a compound of substance and of spirit." This may be the scientific basis of a materialistic philosophy, but a statement so cautiously agnostic hardly rules out philosophies other than materialistic. At the end Sir Arthur Keith says, "Evolution is true; the actions of the human brain depend on deeply seated impulses inherited from a purely animal ancestry; but in the human brain these ancient impulses find at their disposal an instrument which surpasses that of the anthropoid, as much as a cathedral organ does the shepherd's reed. These basal instincts find that they are no longer unregulated and free; a mechanism has appeared in the human brain for their control."

When Mr. Joad talks at far greater length of life as Creative and Purposive, he is not saying much more than this, although he has exploded materialism four times over in the first chapter of "The Meaning of Life." The title of the book is too optimistic, but Mr. Joad is not satisfied with putting spokes in other wheels; he does piece together a wheel of his own. He is a dualist. Matter, the Devil, or as the Hebrews would have said, the Adversary, obstructs Spirit, yet by obstruction makes individuality and the emergence of novelty possible, and is eventually of incalculable value to Spirit. None of the more important enunciations in this little book is new, but Mr. Joad writes lucidly on a number of things about which it is extremely difficult to be lucid. It is always a severe handicap to the scientist and the writer on philosophy that in explaining their ideas to the lay mind they are forced to use similes. There are no adequate similes for human life. It stands alone, the most complicated product of the universe as we know it. To say that death is like a candle going out is really less apposite than to say life is like the bathroom tap running.

According to Major Darwin (and he has studied the question honestly and thoroughly for nearly a quarter of a century) there will be no one in another thousand years capable of understanding either Materialism or Vitalism. Something certainly ought to be done about the 270,000 years of working time lost by sickness every year by persons insured by the State. Individual liberty is a precious thing, but so is logic, and logic is outraged. The State organizes health insurance, subsidizes the aged and the unemployed, houses the insane and the criminal, and taxes everyone else. Yet it may not facilitate the reduction of taxation and the general improvement of the people by discouraging the insane, the diseased, paupers, and criminals from indulging in larger families than any other section of the community. The common argument against Eugenics is that prize cows are such dull creatures, and Eugenics will prussianize the nation and prune to nothing its modest growth of genius. But weakly cows are just as dull; dullness lies in the bovinity not in the perfection. If human nature is interesting when badly and indiscriminately bred, it may be even more interesting when thought is given to Eugenics. And as Sir Arthur Keith makes clear, evolution does not mean that every day we grow better and better. The human child at birth weighs twice as much as the new-born gorilla, while it remains helpless much longer, and so in two ways handicaps both its mother and itself. Evolution is a process of heavy losses on the roundabouts and slender profits on the swings. The mechanism of control must play a much bigger part if we are to be saved from bankruptcy.



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THE SHIFTING CRADLE

The Most Ancient East: The Oriental Prelude to European History. By V. GORDON CHILDE. (Kegan Paul, 15s.)

THE prehistorian's trouble at the moment is that he cannot keep pace with the material that the field-archæologist is putting at his service, and that consequently the best laid conclusions may gang agley even before they reach the stage of publication. It is, indeed, with an apology for his temerity that Professor Gordon Childe introduces us to this brilliant essay on the Ancient East as revealed by the recent discoveries at Badari and the Fayum, at Ur and Kish and in the basin of the Indus. His object, he tells us, has been "to sum up objectively the ascertained facts, together with some authoritative interpretations, so that the reader may hereafter be able to read with more comprehension of their drift the reports of subsequent discoveries." The facts he deals with have indeed revolutionized our conception of the dawn and first flowering of the great historic civilizations of the East. It was contrary to all expectation to discover that towards the end of the fourth millennium, the material civilization of Ur was far more advanced than that of contemporary Egypt, and still more subversive to learn that in the Punjab at that time there existed a civilization, with obvious connections with the Sumerian, that even then was old. The cradle of civilization it might seem had definitely and finally been snatched from Egypt. But at Badari there has been revealed an apparently autochthonous culture much earlier and more primitive than that of predynastic Egypt; yet far removed from the savagery of the Capsian hunters. So the archæological "ashes" return to the land of the Pharaohs, and it may be, so far as the essential arts of food production, weaving, and pottery are concerned, return for good. But even if Egypt be the cradle, it is nevertheless the fact that by the Euphrates—to say nothing of the Indus—civilization appears to have flowered earlier than it did by the Nile.

Professor Childe's descriptions of these recently discovered stages in civilization are the first to be given us in a form that enables us to see them in relation to their past and future, and for that reason, though the book is deliberately popular in aim, both the student and the expert will find it of value. Particularly arresting is the chapter in which is described "the setting of the stage" for the passing of the hunter and food-gatherer into the peasant and food-producer. The scene is North Africa, Arabia, and Mesopotamia, the time is the end of the last Ice Age, and the shifting northward of the Atlantic rain-storms which had till then given the whole of this great area an adequate rain-fall is the propulsive catastrophe. We see the grass lands turning to deserts and the hordes of hunters following the game northward to Europe and the steppes of Asia, or southward to the Sudan; while those that are left congregate in the neighbourhood of the great rivers, where grew the noble grain-bearing grasses, and where, also, congregated the animals they hunted for food.

"Enforced concentration in oases or by the banks of ever more precarious springs and streams," says Professor Childe, "would require an intensified search for means of nourishment. Animals and men would be herded together round pools and wadis that were growing increasingly isolated by desert tracks, and such enforced juxtaposition might almost of itself promote that sort of symbiosis between man and beast that is expressed in the word 'domestication.'"

So, we are entitled to imagine, a great necessity led to the greatest of inventions, and the flock and the herd and the harvest came almost simultaneously into being.

But if necessity laid the foundation of the first civilized communities, it was intercourse between differing cultures that promoted rapid development; and it is Professor Childe's achievement that he shows us again, as he showed us before in "The Dawn of European Civilization" and "The Aryans," how widely cultures were diffused in the prehistoric and early historic world. The Sumerians were certainly in touch with the civilization of the Indus; Sumer and Egypt were borrowing from each other from the earliest times; and Professor Childe suggests that, as much of this diffusion may, indeed must, have been sea-borne, the people

of Magan, a land—probably on the southern shore of Arabia—mentioned in the Babylonian records, were the intermediaries.

Professor Childe is so fair-minded in his interpretations and so moderate in his conjectures that, as he brings these great civilizations of the past into harmony with each other, so also should he, one feels, bring about a reconciliation between even the bitterest partisans of this cradle or the other. Egypt or another, what does it matter if the truth prevail? The book is fully illustrated.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Silver Stallion. By JAMES BRANCH CABELL. Illustrated by FRANK C. PAPÉ. (The Bodley Head, 25s.)

It is safe to suspect satire when a writer creates, in the manner of Swift or Anatole France, fictitious territories. Even "Nostromo" is an indictment of material interests. Mr. Cabell is also something of a satirist. He has created the land of Poictesme ("an illicit union between Poitiers and Angoulesme") in old France. In 1239, disappeared Dom Manuel, ruler of Poictesme, which he had formerly redeemed from the Northmen. On his death the nine lords of Poictesme, the Fellowship of the Silver Stallions, disbanded themselves and went abroad. The book is the story of what happened to each of them and the manner of his death. It may be as well to warn those who are unacquainted with Mr. Cabell's work, that, in spite of its appearance, this is not a story for children. It is, on the contrary, "a comedy of redemption." Manuel is a legendary figure, interpreted in a different spirit by each of his nine vassals. For example, Miramon, the magician, repudiates him as an impostor, while Donander accepts him. Mr. Cabell has a grotesque fancy. Possibly he owes something to Balzac's "Contes Drolatiques." Certainly, he makes some attempt at the shrewdness and coarseness which distinguishes *la littérature grivoise*. But it is doubtful whether his illusions are ever perfect. For his purpose he has fashioned a prose which may be considered amusing, but which is, perhaps, neither here nor there. It is impossible not to be amused by Mr. Papé's quaint drawings.

Antonin Dvorak. By KAREL HOFFMEISTER. Edited and translated by ROSA NEWMARCH. (Bodley Head, 6s.)

This book is a useful and interesting addition to one's musical library. There is very little which has been published in English on Dvorak, and therefore Professor Hoffmeister's volume, half of which is biographical and half critical, is welcome. The early popularity of Dvorak in this country has cooled, and his reputation is now probably lower than it should be. It is a pity that now we are rarely given an opportunity of hearing any of his works other than the "New World" Symphony, the Nigger Quartet, or the Dances. Professor Hoffmeister's analysis and criticism of Dvorak's music is intelligent. It is, we suppose, inevitable that, in the present state of the world, he should over insist upon the nationalism of Dvorak's music. It is doubtful whether nationalism for a composer is really a passport to greatness and immortality.



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REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE "Contemporary Review" has devoted the greater part of its space this month to articles on Foreign Affairs. There are: "M. Poincaré and International Problems," by Sisley Huddleston; "The Final Revelations of Colonel House," by G. P. Gooch; "Russia: a Contrast," by C. Hagberg Wright; "The Saar Valley," by Kenneth Headlam-Morley; "Russian Policy in the Balkans," by Dimitri Jotzow, and "The Jews under the Minorities Treaties," by Israel Cohen. The "Nineteenth Century," on the other hand, has a number which is mainly concerned with Home Affairs—"Local Government," by the Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain, heads the list, and there are as well: "The Miner's Home," by Leonora Murray; "The Condition of England, 1838. 1928," by Sir John Marriott, and "Disestablishment by Consent," by the Bishop of Durham. In the "Fortnightly Review" we have: "Anglo-French Friendship: Retrospect and a Moral," by Thomas Barclay; "German Reparations," by "Augur," and "The Position of the Colonies in World Progress," by Commander Kenworthy, in the course of which the writer remarks that "the only Empire of modern times to adopt the Dominion policy, viz., the British Empire, has made a success of it. The more shadowy the Imperial connection grows, the more secure it becomes, and time is likely to add to the truth of this seeming paradox. If England had adopted the Dominion policy earlier we should never have lost the New England settlements. Probably the capital of the Empire would now be Chicago. Had Spain adopted the Dominion system she would have maintained the same shadowy but lasting sovereignty over South America. Buenos Aires would probably now be the political capital, as it is, indeed, the financial capital, of the Spanish-speaking world." The idea that the more shadowy the imperial connection grows, the more secure it becomes, is an undoubted truth, and well expressed, but surely it is a strange aberration to suppose that this "shadowy connection" could change its headquarters and still operate? The more shadowy the connection, the more imperative that every natural and tradition-gathering element in it should remain unaltered. And, in any case, as history shows it is the hardest thing in the world to change a capital—even Peter the Great did not make a real success of it.

The "Empire Review" has an article by Sir Robert Horne on "Prospects of Settlement Overseas," and the "Review of Reviews" has "Anglo-American Discord," by Wickham Steed. In the "Socialist Review," W. Arnold Forster writes on "Arbitration: the Government's Record," and Allan Young on "The Struggle for Power: a Realist View."

"The sun, which had emerged from the clouds for an instant, now disappeared, irrevocably, behind a sky which presented from horizon to horizon a uniform expanse of leaden grey." This is not an actual quotation, but it gives, does it not, a fairly accurate impression of the mood in which all short stories and sketches, barring thrillers, are now conceived? A dreary situation, an attempt to cope with it, a final flop—it is Chekhov, of course, to whom we are indebted, more even than to the Spirit of the Age, for this atmosphere and this technique; it can be expanded to three thousand words, or contracted to twelve hundred, according to circumstances, but one thing is certain, the leaden sky will punctually close down in the last line. Perhaps Mr. Lytton Strachey, who has already delivered this generation from the tedium of the older sort of biography, has in his latest work pointed out the way of escape from the leaden sky, and we shall soon have romance and tragedy in three thousand or twelve hundred words. In the meantime, the "Yale Review" publishes a short story by Ford Madox Ford—"The Miracle"—which, though a slight thing, escapes from the prevailing atmosphere, and "The Shirts," by Karel Capek, in the "Fortnightly," though it is in the familiar minor key, has an interesting psychological point. "The Dial" has "Fourth Declamation," by Kenneth Burke, who has been given the Dial Award for 1928. There is an article on Mr. Burke by William Carlos Williams—"Whites Writing up the Blacks," by Albert Halper; "Cicero and the Rhetoricians," by Padraic Colum; "Rain on the Railroad Yards," a poem by Edward Sapir, and a Bulgarian Letter from Stoyan Christowe. In the "Criterion," we have "Some Opinions on Bernard Shaw's Intelligent Woman's Guide," by Harold Laski, M. C. D'Arcy, S. J., A. L. Rowse, and Kenneth Pickthorn; three poems by Walter Lowenfels, and "The Literature of Fascism," by T. S. Eliot. The "Venture" is another new Cambridge paper. The present number contains poems by J. R. Ackerley, Basil Wright, and Humbert Wolfe, a short story by Michael Redgrave, and woodcuts by Douglas Davidson and Claude Flight.

INSURANCE NOTES

LIFE OFFICE BONUSES

A PART from those life assurance offices which make valuations of their assets and liabilities and distributions of bonus annually, there are six offices which are due to make declarations of bonuses as at the end of last year, viz., "Alliance," "Liverpool and London and Globe," "National Mutual of Australasia," "Scottish Provident," "Scottish Widows," and the "Yorkshire." Last year was also "Bonus Year" for the Atlas Assurance Co., Ltd. This Company adopts an uncommon method of dealing with valuations and bonuses in that it makes and publishes valuations every year, but it distributes bonuses only once every three years. A distribution is about to take place for the three years just ended, and the figures have just been announced. The ordinary reversionary bonus to policyholders has been increased to 42s. per cent. per annum, and on this occasion a special bonus of 18s. per cent. has been included, making a total of 60s. per cent. per annum calculated on the sum assured and existing bonuses. Further, the interim bonus to be paid in respect of claims arising in 1929 is raised to the high rate of 48s. per cent. While this result must be gratifying to the connections of the "Atlas," it furnishes another argument in favour of a downward revision of new premiums in the interest of those who value immediate protection more highly than a large accumulation of bonuses in the distant future.

ANNUAL DISTRIBUTIONS

In commenting in these notes for January of last year on the subject of life office bonuses, we asked the question, "Why not annual bonuses for all offices?" Curiosity has now led us to examine the record of the life offices for the past fourteen years in order to ascertain how many offices have made the change from either quinquennial or triennial to annual valuations. The result of this inquiry is astonishing. Excluding the "Atlas," whose conversion is not complete, there are only three British offices out of the total of sixteen which now distribute bonuses annually, which were not doing so before the Great War. The names of these offices and the dates when the change in their practice became effective are as follows:—

National Mutual Life Assurance Society (London),
January 1st, 1924.

Co-Operative Insurance Society, January 1st, 1926.

Standard Life Assurance Company, November 16th,
1926.

It is well known, of course, that the view is strongly held that long periods between valuations are necessary to ensure a stable rate of bonus. But does this consideration outweigh the advantages to be gained by abandoning a custom which was in operation long before existing policyholders were born? It is doubtful. In any event the pressure of present-day competition will probably operate in the next few years to bring more offices into the ranks of the companies distributing bonuses annually.

THE EVENT OF 1928

An outstanding event of 1928 was the extension of the practice of granting life assurance policies at Monthly Premiums. Beginning with the "Legal and General" scheme launched about eighteen months ago, the number of offices granting assurances under this plan has now increased to just over thirty. Life Assurance, which should rank in urgency and importance with rent, rates, light, heat, &c., in the family budget, has always had to wage a difficult fight with less essential items of expenditure. This difficulty has been increased by the wide development of the system of instalment buying—a system which has opened the way to the enjoyment of luxuries which were hitherto unattainable. But for the action of the life offices in introducing "easy payment" life assurance, the facile excuse of incomes heavily mortgaged for the purchase of motor cars, &c., would have been added to the already formidable number which the advocates of adequate life assurance have to combat daily.

Bona-fide readers of THE NATION may address their Insurance queries to our Insurance contributor. Address all communications: "Insurance," THE NATION, 38, Great James Street, Bedford Row, London, W.C.1.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

A SPECULATOR REVIEWS THE YEAR—INDEX NUMBERS—1929 PROSPECTS

AN intriguing problem for an idle moment is to speculate how the average speculator on the Stock Exchange "came out" of the past year. There is, of course, no such person as the "average" speculator. That is why it is useless to turn to the security price index numbers for guidance in a matter of this sort. Taking a broad view of the markets in 1928, it seemed more difficult to make money out of them than it was in 1927. For the first four months of the year, when the annual reports of industrial and trading companies reflected, as they appeared, the happy recovery that had been made since the coal strike period, everything was plain sailing. Every speculator made money. The first check to the industrial "bull" movement we noticed in *THE NATION* of May 19th. Markets had then become tired. Then came the New York slump in June, followed by reaction on the Continental bourses and in London. Again the London market was upset by the death of Captain Lowenstein in July, and the slump in the Loewenstein securities. After the summer holidays the bull movement was resumed, but it was much more "selective." The heavy weight of new issues was beginning to tell. Sharp rises occurred in some markets, especially those in which American speculators took an interest, while sharp falls occurred in others, such as the British Celanese group and home railways. A general reaction set in during October accentuated by a slump in the smaller gramophone shares and the 1s. gambles. By December markets were firmer, but the King's illness made for uncertainty. The Ford boom was an American "special."

We would guess that the wealthy speculator made money out of the 1928 markets, while the little speculator "came out" with a substantial loss. The following table shows the prices of the "heavy" industrial gambles last year:—

	Price End 1927.	Highest Price 1928.	Price End 1928.	% rise or fall Col. 3 over Col. 1.	% fall Col. 3 over Col. 2.
Gramophone £1 ...	9½	15½	13½	+38%	-13%
Courtaulds £1 ...	7½	9½	4½*	+8%	-7%
Imp. Tobacco £1 ...	101/9	133/6	130/6	+28%	-2%
Swedish Mch 100kr.	20½	25½	24	+18%	-6%
United Molasses £1	58/-	8	150/-	+159%	-6%
Shell £1 ...	4 7-16	6½	5½	+32%	-4%
British Celanese 10s.	4½	6 13-16	1½	-61%	-74%
Marconi 10s. ...	2 1-16	5 5-16	3 15-16	+91%	-26%
Dunlop 6s. 8d. ...	32/6	36/4	23/10½	-26%	-34%
Guadalquivir no par	8	35	8	nil	-77%

* 8½ allowing for cap. bonus of 100%.

In this table the "highest price" column is as important as "End 1927," because the most nimble of speculators will often get caught at the "top." The small speculator would probably have bought the speculative shares of low denomination, and subscribed to many of the new issues of preferred shares of £1 and deferred shares of 1s. The following table will show the result of some of the little gambles last year:—

	Price End 1927.	Highest Price 1928.	Price End 1928.	% rise or fall Col. 3 over Col. 1.	% fall Col. 3 over Col. 2.
Photomaton 5s. ...	12/-*	19/-	15/-	+25%	-47%
Duophone 10s. ...	13/9*	4 15-32	13/9	nil	-550%
British Photo- tone 5s. ...	5/6*	12/-	4/-	-20%	-67%
Greyhound Racing Association 1s.	2/7½	6/-	4d.	-87%	-94%
Waste Food Products £1 ...	15/9*	97/6	40/-	+154%	-59%
Ner Sag £1 ...	2½	9	3½	+33%	-61%

* Price at which introduced or first quoted.

If we now postulate that impossible person the "average" investor, we find that he would have made a little money if he had followed the *BANKERS' MAGAZINE* indices, which show an appreciation of 3.8 per cent., and would have lost if he had kept to the *INVESTORS' CHRONICLE*

index, which, at November 30th, stood at 128.4 against 130.9 on December 31st, 1927. The explanation brings out the defects of security price index numbers. In the *BANKERS' MAGAZINE* index no change has been made in the constituent securities since December, 1921, except where the grouping of the home railways made an alteration necessary. The par value of a number of selected stocks has been taken, and the market values taken out at different dates. The initial weighting of this index depended on the par value of each stock taken. For example, of the 278 variable dividend securities taken, 54 are those of railways, but as the par value of these stocks is £1,038 millions and the par value of the whole 278 securities no more than £1,635 millions, the result is that the railway ordinary stocks had an initial weight of 10 in a total weighting of 16. On present market values they have a weight of 10.8 in a total weighting of 28.6. Every City Editor quotes the *BANKERS' MAGAZINE* figures, but we see little relation in its indices to real life on the Stock Exchange. We generally quote the *INVESTORS' CHRONICLE* indices in preference to those of the *BANKERS' MAGAZINE*, but they are by no means perfect. In this case, the base is December 31st, 1923, the assumption being that an investor has bought as much of each stock as £100 cash would give him on zero day. Various "groups" of securities are taken, and an arithmetical average is made of the lot. The difficulty here is in the weighting of the different groups. We must refrain from drawing any serious conclusions from our existing security price indices—useful as they may be as monthly barometers of market conditions.

Looking ahead is, after all, what the speculator wants to do. He hates learning lessons from the past. The cartoon "Mind the Step," showing the baby 1929 tripping over a step which is labelled "General Election" is strictly applicable to the London Stock Exchange. We doubt whether the most purblind of Bank chairmen will be able to take a very cheerful view of trade in his annual general meeting speech. "Rationalization" in the coal, iron and steel industries will be the hopeful note to sound, but are not the immediate results of rationalization an increase not a decrease in unemployment? In America it is more than usually difficult to make a forecast in view of the huge increase in loans to brokers from private corporations and individuals. These are the loans which are designated in the weekly bank returns as loans made for "the account of others." They have increased by nearly \$2,000,000,000 this year. Indirectly they are responsible for the "bull" movement. They are usually made by banks acting as agents, but they are not loans involving the increase of bank deposits, and so they do not require the increase of bank reserves. Their existence has therefore enabled the banks to continue to lend freely for either speculative or other purposes. This is how the money has been found to keep the American boom going.

If loans "for others" continue to expand, stock markets in New York will be good, fortunate speculators will continue to spend their profits freely, trade will boom, and companies will continue to expand by financing through the sale of new stock. If, on the other hand, "loans for the account of others" contract or even stop expanding, the banks will be called upon heavily for bank loans, interest rates will rise to dizzy heights, and stock prices will break. The purchasing power of speculators will be curtailed, new financing by corporations will be restricted, and business will slow down. Further, there is the complication of the Ford plants which have come back into production with a larger capacity than before. As competition in the automobile industry becomes more severe, price cutting will follow, profits will suffer, and the stock market will probably begin to take alarm. The outlook is therefore not too bright either in New York or London.

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